The Dissertation Committee for David Wayne Bates Certifies that this is the Approved Version of the Following Dissertation:

Scogan's Choice: Vachel Lindsay's Short Fiction, Poetry and Prose

Committee:

_____
Jeffrey Meikle, Supervisor

_____
Janet Davis

_____
Stephen Marshall

_____
Mark Smith

_____
Jennifer M. Wilks

Scogan's Choice: Vachel Lindsay's Short Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

By

David Wayne Bates B.A.; B.A.; M.A.; M.A.T

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2010

Dedication

For my parents, Wayne and Rose Bates, my brothers Frank and Bill, and my son Charles

Scogan's Choice: Vachel Lindsay's Short Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

Publication No. _____

David Wayne Bates, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

Supervisor: Jeffrey Meikle

Virtually all commentators on the work of Vachel Lindsay have seen his poetry and prose as primarily artistic and for the most part indecipherable. I have tried to show that Lindsay intended to address social construction in America. He tried to use his art to change America, first and foremost, but also the world. And the changes he wanted to enact revolved around the issues of race, religion, feminism, and temperance. Lindsay wanted to alter the racial hierarchy in American to promote a more inclusive perspective. But not to make it all inclusive. And one of the prime

motivations for Lindsay's interest in race was to change his own status within the hierarchy. There was an American Indian branch to his family tree. Consequently, Indians became prime candidates for social inclusion in his poetry and prose.

The Springfield race riots of 1908 represented a formative experience for Lindsay and helped propel him to a discussion of race. Lindsay claimed Springfield, Illinois as home, and the injustice and brutality of the riots shamed him and clashed with his perspective of civilized and religious advancement. In writing "The Congo," *The Art of the Moving Picture*, and *The Golden Book of Springfield*, Lindsay saw himself as promoting racial equality and harmony. However, he intentionally promoted harmony and order at the expense of equality. I conclude my dissertation with an observation from the sociologist Herbert Marcuse to the effect that saving oneself at the expense of others is hardly a heroic act.

Table of Contents

"Americans learned to define freedom as feeling free, escaping from difficult choices by embracing stereotypes, rather than struggling to act and think as free people."

Robert Sklar.[1]

"Race, in these (scientific) usages, pretends to be an objective term of classification, when in fact it is a dangerous trope."

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.[2]

Chapter I

Introduction

Listening to the recordings of Vachel Lindsay reciting his poetry is like watching the thuganomics of WWE wrestling—a Dave Batista flying double suplex—the practiced dramaturgy of my grandfather, Jesus (pronounced Hey-Seus), before he passed away.[3] Lindsay's droning emphasis, the way he stretched the vowels and consonants in the recordings of his rhymes, seems contrived, but not so very different than the famously popular vocalizations of the singer Bert Williams in his songs "The Phrenologist Coon" (1901), or "My Little Zulu Babe" (1901), recordings which also survived. This should come as no surprise. Lindsay used the rhythms of the popular songs of his day as the

[1] I. F. Stone. *The Truman Era*. Introduction by Robert Sklar. (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), ix.
[2] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes," *Race: Writing and Difference*. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 5.
[3] WWE refers to World Wrestling Entertainment, and Dave Batista is one of the more popular heavy weight wrestling actors working the circuit.

basis of his poetry. Race, context, culture, class, the new emphasis on visual pastiche, and the-reluctance-to-believe all cause many of those of the twenty-first century to see the recorded events of an earlier century, hearing the same words, but with little recognition that those words no longer mean the same thing. This helps explain my incredulity when faced with the fact that grandfather never missed a bout; he saw the theatre in the ring as a morality play, reading signs for portents invisible to me.

The fact that Batista is a Spanish name should have been a clue. Were it not for the fact that he *was* my grandfather and that I know he never spoke a word of English, in a land that demanded that token of linguistic loyalty, I might question the probity of Dave Batista's flying assaults on blonde haired masculinity. Towards the end I know grandfather used to act out, a five foot three inch, eighty-five pound, octogenarian, with fists of fury. And some might have seen him as addled or "insane" *for* viewing wrestling as anything other than a pay for view charade, and then acting on that charade. But I know my uncles never saw it that way, nor my aunts.

Unlike my grandfather, the American poet, Vachel Lindsay, had little interest in wrestling, but he did write a long poem about boxing: "John L. Sullivan, the Boston Strong Boy."[4] I doubt anyone ever understood the poem. Unlike other twentieth century poets who still claim name recognition in the twenty first century, most of Lindsay's poetry and prose never received scholarly interpretation or critique. So, a poem entitled "John L. Sullivan" must have been about boxing, just as my grandfather's interest in wrestling reflected only his classical interest in the Greco Roman style. In a three page

[4] Vachel Lindsay, *Collected Poems* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 93-95.

easy to grasp packet, Lindsay's poem demonstrated the style and message he used in all his major works. In the poem, Lindsay referenced: "*Judge*," "*Puck*" (political magazines), "The Gibson Girl," "Tennyson's Elaine," "Louisa Alcott," "New Orleans," "Boston," "John L. Sullivan," "Jake Kilrain," "Nick Carter" (fictional private detective, circa 1889), "Elsie Books" (Christian fiction, circa 1889), "*St Nicholas* Magazine" (literature for children, circa 1889), "E. P. Roe" (religious novelist, died 1888), "Rogers groups" (popular statuary, circa 1889), "Howells," "Blaine," "Maine," "Barnum," "Ingersoll," "Satan, Judas, Thomas Paine," "Robert Elsmere" (title of religious novel), "Phillips Brooks" (Episcopal clergyman), "Boston Brahmins," "Mark Twain," "Pop Anson" (Chicago Cubs baseball player, circa 1889), "Tammany," "Cain," "Wilson," "Roosevelt," "Stanley" (African explorer), "Emin" (Emin Pasha), "Van Bibber Davis" (comic soldier of fortune), "John J. Ingalls" (politician), the "Cronin murder" (Irish nationalists murdered Cronin), "Louvain" (district in Belgium, reference to World War I), "Lorraine," "League of Nations," and the "London Bridge" (falling down). So, we have a poem for the ages, easy to interpret and understand, devoted to boxing.[5] One of the problems writing from a popular culture perspective is that the shelf life of a statement is severely constrained, though, as we'll see, Lindsay was able to turn that constraint to an advantage, repeatedly.

Despite the title, the poem has virtually nothing to do with John L. Sullivan or boxing. Sullivan simply stood as a metaphor for conflict and war, the events leading up

[5] W. C. Heinz edited a book entitled *The Fireside Book of Boxing* (1961) where he includes Lindsay's "John L. Sullivan" as an example of literature devoted to boxing. W. C. Heinz, Editor. *The Fireside Book of Boxing* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961).

to World War I. And every noun, name, or action served as a symbol for how the world had arrived at a state of war, a necessary and transformative condition for the creation of a new world order. The poem was about the process of social revolution. All of Lindsay's major works were about revolution, conservative revolution, a return to the theocratic order of Lindsay's youth. But I very much doubt anyone has ever understood either the poem, specifically or his work generally, that way.

There are two broad categories of scholarship on the subject of Vachel Lindsay and his work. The two branches can be broken into foreign and domestic scholars, more properly European and American scholars. Balz Engler, Marc Chenetier, and Ann Massa would comprise the best of the European contingent. Over the last forty years these three authors have been more prolific than anyone else in terms of pages devoted to Lindsay. Significantly, both Marc Chenetier and Ann Massa were recent past presidents of the European American Studies Association. I am unaware of any recent American past president of the American Studies Association who has devoted even an extended article to the subject of Vachel Lindsay. Balz Engler correctly argues that Ann Massa's *Fieldworker for the American Dream* (1970) was the first "major reassessment of Lindsay's work."[6]

Engler and Chenetier take a postmodernist perspective of Lindsay's poetry, which is notable, for most American scholars approach Lindsay as a modernist. An exception to that would be Myron Lounsbury, past Chairman of American Studies at the University of

[6] Balz Engler, *Poetry and Community* (Tubingen: Stauffenburg, 1990), 105. Ann Massa, *Vachel Lindsay: Fieldworker for the American Dream* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970).

Maryland and editor of *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies* (1995), Lindsay's unpublished (at the time of his death) second volume of film criticism. Lounsbury, an American, also takes a postmodernist perspective of Lindsay's work.[7] He suggests that the use of an anthropological approach to Lindsay's work, such as that of Claude Levi-Strauss, would open new understandings to the texts (50). It is the *new* understandings that are largely lacking in the American approach to Lindsay scholarship. As an American, I will argue Lindsay as racist. But Balz Engler asks why other racists and anti-Semitic writers of Lindsay's day have been forgiven their transgressions and awarded their place in the canon while Lindsay remains both forgotten and neglected, at least by Americans (99, 101).

A good demonstration of the comparative difference in style and content between the European and American approach to the work of Vachel Lindsay would be the work of the American T. R. Hummer, in *The Muse in the Machine: Essays on Poetry and the Anatomy of the Body Politic* (2006). Hummer devotes a chapter to Vachel Lindsay in his text. And Hummer's perspective of Lindsay turns out to be virtually the same one would glean from any American analysis of the work of Vachel Lindsay over the last ninety years. That is unsurprising in that Hummer relies on the same American biographers of Lindsay (Edgar Lee Masters and Eleanor Ruggles), and the same sources those biographers relied on, in framing his analysis. Hummer makes no mention of W. E. B. Du Bois in his text; he makes no mention of Paul Dunbar's contribution to Lindsay's most famous poem, "The Congo." In fact, Hummer only mentions Dunbar

[7] Myron Lounsbury, ed., *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies: A Second Book of Film Criticism by Vachel Lindsay* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc), 6-7.

once, and that in passing. Just as he only mentions Vachel Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield* (1920) in passing.[8] If one starts with the same data, and adds virtually nothing new, it is reasonable to assume that one would come to the same conclusions, over and over again. That would be the test of the scientific method, and that is in fact what has happened in the research and conclusions concerning the work of Vachel Lindsay. The most insightful work, the most scholarly work on the subject of Vachel Lindsay in the last forty years has come from Europe.

It is not that there haven't been valuable contributions by Americans to the scholarship on Vachel Lindsay. Myron Lounsbury has been cited. Bringing Lindsay's second book of film criticism to publication was certainly a valuable contribution to scholarship. However, we see in Lounsbury's first book, *The Origins of American Film Criticism, 1909-1939* (1973), which addresses Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), the same pattern or issue found in Glenn Wolfe's *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (1973).[9] Both are obviously published dissertations, little changed or revised from their original formats. These were not the works of life-long scholars carefully tending and cultivating their concepts. In like vein, there is virtually no scholarship devoted to Lindsay's only novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920). Ron Sakolsky's "Introduction" to the 1999 edition of *The Golden Book* would be an

[8] T. R. Hummer, *The Muse in the Machine: Essays on Poetry and the Anatomy of the Body Politic* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006).
[9] Myron Lounsbury, *The Origins of American Film Criticism, 1909-1939* (New York: Arno Press, 1973). Glenn Wolfe, *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (New York: Arno Press, 1973).

exception.[10] But though Sakolsky's explanation of *The Golden Book* is informative, few would take it as scholarly. Most of the work done on Vachel Lindsay has come in the form of master theses or doctoral dissertations.

Analysis of Vachel Lindsay's racial perspectives has produced some of the most focused and scholarly critiques of Lindsay's work. Usually, this analysis has focused on Lindsay's poem, "The Congo." Susan Gubar and Rachael DuPlessis, in *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture* (1997) and "Hoo, Hoo, Hoo" (2001), respectively, present well considered and scholarly analyses of the poem, giving Lindsay credit for an attempt to avoid a racist perspective of black Americans, though acknowledging his unequivocal failure.[11] However, neither of them has broached new material. Neither of them has addressed the possibility of Paul Dunbar's role in the production of "The Congo," or even the possibility that W. E. B. Du Bois might have inadvertently contributed to the racial perspective of the poem. The poet and novelist Ishmael Reed presents a critical and creative analysis of Lindsay's work. Reed's novel, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1974), though taking a line from Lindsay's "Congo" as a title, seems really to be more intended as a rebuttal of the social reformation Lindsay projects in his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). And in the corpus of his work, Reed takes several

[10] Vachel Lindsay, *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Introduction by Ron Sakolsky (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999).
[11] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Hoo, Hoo, Hoo." *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Susan Gubar, *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture*. Arnold Rampersad and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

poetic shots at Vachel Lindsay's perspective on race, such as in Reed's "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan," and "The Vachel Lindsay Fault."[12]

I found Myron Lounsbury's recommendation to incorporate the style and tactics of anthropology, and specifically the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, useful. But if there is a single critique I might make of virtually all of these texts, it would be to note the lack of a historical literary context in most of the analyses these authors have framed. The authors noted above most often present well considered arguments, but they are often arguments framed from either a New Critical or postmodernist perspective, arguments based on an analytical study of the text of the poem, short story, or longer prose. A discussion of the sociohistorical context of Lindsay's work often seems either limited or entirely absent. It is this tendency to neglect the historical or social context, or maybe only the lack of curiosity concerning that context, that I think has led to misunderstandings and oversights concerning the work of Vachel Lindsay. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, in *Racial Formation in the United States* (1994), suggest that it is impossible to "oppose racism without comprehending the sociohistorical context in which concepts of race are involved." They suggest one cannot even *address* the issue of race without access to an understanding of what came before.[13] And most of Lindsay's major works, in one form or another, attempted to address the issue of race.

---

[12] Ishmael Reed. "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan." *From Totem to Hip-hop: A Multicultural Anthology of Poetry Across the Americas, 1900-2002* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), 301. Ishmael Reed. *Mumbo Jumbo* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1974). Ishmael Reed, "The Vachel Lindsay Fault." *Chattanooga* (New York: Random House, 1973), 38.

[13] Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 1994), vii.

The work of Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931) stands as an unused bridge between what many in Lindsay's day were saying and how we have interpreted what they said. It is as if the Tappan Zee did not exist, and you had to drive through New York City via the Holland Tunnel in bumper-to-bumper traffic just to get from Newark to White Plains and beyond. Lindsay lived and studied in New York City with the Ashcan School of Art, that same Ashcan School that focused on depicting the plight of immigrants and the slums. But no one has ever addressed that connection between Lindsay, immigrants, and his first of a kind examination of film: *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). No one has ever addressed the underlying basis of Lindsay's metaphors. Lindsay saw film as a social work opportunity, an opportunity to Americanize immigrants and teach them English. He saw it as social work conducted from the big screen. But this was just one step on the path to reordering the nation. He spoke to a day and age when melting pots were all the rage. And in ignoring the larger issues of class, race, and religion, the question of where on the scale of "civilization" the new immigrants placed, there is a sense of something silenced, missing, or willingly forgotten from Lindsay's message. All of Lindsay's major texts evolved in the shadow of World War I. Lindsay saw that war as an opportunity and necessary condition to the construction of a new world order. "John L. Sullivan" was Lindsay's version of William Butler Yeats's poem "The Second Coming." It was a demonstration of the belief in signs parodied by Meredith Wilson in *The Music Man* (1957).[14] Rereading Lindsay's texts with an eye to the interpretation of signs allows one to see and understand Lindsay's reservations concerning the trajectory of civilization.

[14] The ongoing refrain in the musical was, "You Got Trouble" "right here in River City," with a capital 'T'

There were a lot of differences between living in the United States a century or more ago and today. Hermann Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" can't be read—and understood—without a thorough grounding in the New Testament, Congregationalist terminology, and theology. Much the same could be said of Lindsay's poetry and prose. One has to understand the underpinnings of the statements before the words themselves can make any sense. Increasingly, psychology (the study of the brain's organic chemistry) and science have displaced religion as the way we look at the world and the way the world is discussed. But the contest between traditional religion and modern science was still in doubt in Lindsay's day. Lindsay lived in a place and time where traditional belief was still possible—and he was a Platonist to the core. It was the idea, or soul, or spirit that moved him. Poetry, film, fiction, and prose were just the means by which he promoted a return to that old-time religious order. But it was always a return with a twist.

Vachel Lindsay was born Nicholas Vachel Lindsay on November 10, 1879, in Springfield, Illinois. His family was solidly middle class. Both of his parents were well educated for the day; his father, Dr. Vachel Thomas Lindsay, made his living as a physician, and Mrs. Ester Catharine Frazee Lindsay was a mother, housewife, religious devotee, and an artist who had been educated in Europe. Vachel was born in his own Washington Street home. Next door stood the Illinois Executive Mansion, home to the governor of Illinois, standing within sight of, and an easy walk from, the Illinois State Capitol. Many of Vachel's poems—such as "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight (In

---

and that rhymes with 'P' and that stands for Pool" (Snyder 206). Russell J. Snyder, *Emotions: The Controlling Factor in the Church* (South Bend, Indiana: Xulon Press, 2008), 206.

Springfield, Illinois)," "The Eagle that is Forgotten" (a reference to Illinois Governor John P. Altgeld), "The Broncho that would not be Broken," and "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan" (the Populist candidate for president in 1896)—make reference to Springfield, Illinois, and its populist farming culture. Where he was born helps explain Lindsay's politics. Then as today, Springfield stood in opposition to Chicago as David stood opposed to Goliath, a *comparatively* small town overshadowed by a metropolis. Even by 1879, the year of Lindsay's birth, no objective observer would have seen Springfield as a small town anymore, but compared to the size, corruption, and machine politics of Chicago, Springfield could still be viewed that way. It is the figurative comparison and not the actual size of Springfield that helps us understand Lindsay's adherence to the New Localism and the City Beautiful, philosophies popular in that day. When Lindsay wrote of the immigrants flooding the United States, a major theme in his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), it is fair to assume this would have been a long term topic of discussion in Springfield, Illinois.

Two central events or conditions colored the entirety of Lindsay's life. The first was the fact of his epilepsy. Lindsay carried the reputation of the village idiot throughout his life. In a letter to the editor of *Poetry Magazine*, Harriet Moody, dated March 31, 1925, he wrote: "People thought I fought for fame. I only fought my way from being the town fool and the family idiot."[15] It is easy to connect this reputation to his epilepsy. But epilepsy meant more than just bad press. If Russell H. Conwell's *Acres of Diamonds* (1915) is anything to go by, it was not unusual in Lindsay's day for people to read

[15] Marc Chenetier. *Letters of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1979), 352.

personal misfortune as the work of God. In regards to poverty, Conwell writes: "To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins. . . is to do wrong, no doubt about it. . . ."[16] Personal misfortune was often seen in the context of a morality play. But epilepsy also carried with it the connotation of a heredity flaw, tainting not only the individual but the family.

In addition to the moral and social implications of epilepsy, the disease is not confined to periodic displays of convulsions or fits, something Lindsay feared would happen in his public appearances throughout his life. Epilepsy affects one's coordination; it tends to predict learning disabilities; and it is also associated with intense religious experiences.[17] Where there is a record, almost everyone who ever met Lindsay commented on how unusual the fellow was. At a meeting or recital dedicated to Vachel Lindsay in 1962, Robert Frost complimented Lindsay at some length, but he also noted:

> Well, some of these young people as they are nowadays, they think it's necessary to be crazy to be an artist or a poet, it's a requirement and they know they don't have it, so they go off in some corner and try to pretend to be crazy. There was no pretense to that boy: he was the real thing. . . . No fake, but really crazy (Chenetier xii).

---

[16] Russell Herman Conwell and Robert Shackelton. *Acres of Diamonds* (New York: Harper and Brothers 1915), 21.

[17] Christine Cull, and Laura Hillary Goldstein. *The Clinical Psychologist's Handbook of Epilepsy: Assessment and Management.* Illustrated Edition (New York: Psychology Press, 1997), 185. John H. Menkes, Harvey B. Sarnat, and Bernard L. Maria. *Child Neurology*. 7th Edition (London: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 2005), 1132. Steven C. Schachter, Gregory L. Holmes, and Dorothee Ksteleijn-Nolst Trenite. *Behavioral Aspects of Epilepsy: Principles and Practice* (New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2007), 256.

Epilepsy is symptomatic of a generalized neurological problem. Where there is epilepsy, there are usually other issues. The sense of there being multiple issues associated with epilepsy would probably have been the understanding of the disease in Lindsay's day, though perhaps with a good deal less sympathy.

Lindsay had a temper. Particularly if he thought he was being judged or censured, he could be very verbally aggressive. And there are accounts of his application of physical abuse, particularly to his wife Elizabeth Conner Lindsay. Apparently, at some point, the community acted to intervene on her behalf, a reflection of how far the abuse had progressed. Lindsay lived with and hid his epilepsy all of his life. And though the reasons for his suicide were many, at least one contributing cause was the Mayo Clinic's diagnosis of his epilepsy, within a month of his suicide.

In the edition of Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915) that we'll use in our discussion of Lindsay's texts, Stanley Kauffmann writes: "Lindsay was a fool of course, and some of this book is foolish."[18] Implicitly, Kauffmann raised the question of Lindsay's intellectual ability, his education, and whether the man was even passably well read. These are difficult issues to assess. There is supporting evidence to both praise and censure Lindsay's intellectual ability. He was no William James, esteemed Harvard psychologist. He was not particularly studious, but those who knew him, such as Stephen Graham, cited his ability to recite from memory for hours on end. He was well read, in a focused sense.

[18] Vachel Lindsay. *The Art of the Moving Picture.* Martin Scorsese, ed. Stanley Kauffman, Introduction (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), ix.

His readings were mostly confined to the arts, the allied discipline of religion, and the influence of art and religion on society. If he seems more a product of the 1890s than the twentieth century, I suspect this reflects his fiscal dependence. Into his forties he lived as a dependant in his parents' home. At twenty-four years of age, he was banished from that house. An aspiring art student, he had brought home from college a sketch of a nude he was working-on. "He was forced to quit the house almost on his knees [to travel to Chicago] and from Chicago to compose a letter of abject apology: 'My Dear Papa, I am very very sorry.'"[19] Lindsay could not afford, on either a fiscal or familial level, to alienate his parents, and they were not inclined to be morally, politically, or intellectually flexible. It is very clear that much of his work was written with an eye to what his parents would censure or accept. In a letter to his mother and father, dated November 10, 1903, Lindsay wrote: "I shall strive for your ideals of force and democracy in art."[20] Of the three major works we will examine in this study all came from those years of dependence.

Lindsay was gregarious. He was a regular correspondent with Theodore Roosevelt and Jane Addams. If you look through the collected letters of the architect Frank Lloyd Wright, you find letters from Vachel Lindsay. I suspect Lindsay wrote to virtually everyone who was anyone in his day and time, domestically or abroad. I suspect Lindsay's learning style emphasized verbal interaction, and that this was one of the reasons for his attraction to film. Some prefer people to books. I think Lindsay was

[19] Eleanor Ruggles. *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1959), 84. The 1888-1889 focus of Lindsay's poem, "John L. Sullivan," would also seem to highlight these years are significant.
[20] Glenn Joseph Wolfe, *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 52.

one of those people. Though I think Lindsay was very bright, I think much of his intellectual development would have come by way of popular magazines, such as *The World's Work*, and not necessarily through more dedicated or rigorous texts.

The other event which framed Lindsay's life was the death of his three younger sisters, in March and April of 1888.[21] His sister Isabel would have been seven at the time, Ester five, and Eudora two-and-a-half. The girls died of scarlet fever. This was a body blow to the family, not the charade of a flying suplex, but the real thing. From Vachel's accounts, his mother never recovered from the tragedy. One of Vachel Lindsay's biographers, Eleanor Ruggles, quotes Mrs. Lindsay, referring to the death of her daughters: "I thought I should go mad" (25). In his December 27, 1922, letter to his publicist, A. J. Armstrong, Lindsay suggested the death of his sisters did drive his mother mad:

> But my mother lost three children in three weeks thereafter, and was never the same. She moved from a student of the arts to a religious fanatic and thereafter till her death only people who held some church office were welcome to the house. The house was always packed with religious committees of which she was always chairman, and woe to any one who proposed anything else. She died at the telephone one may say, calling up her last committee. The only time this terrible routine was altered was when by almost forced methods I got her to England, and there for a little

[21] Three of the family's children lived to adulthood: Vachel's older sister Olive, Vachel himself, and his youngest sister Joy, who had not been born at the time of the scarlet fever epidemic of 1888.

> while she stepped back to her thirtieth year, and talked as she used to before her children died (263).

Lindsay's memory of the trauma recalls Marx's statement—"Religion is the opiate of the masses"—in its original intent. Before the time of modern medicine and the general availability of the opiate cure, religion was the only surcease, the only relief to be had in the face of real suffering. There is no doubt Lindsay's mother, Catherine, became a "religious fanatic," almost overnight. Nor was her embrace of religion such an exceptional reaction to a sudden and inescapable awareness of one's own impotence, culpability, and despair.[22]

If Vachel had ever been able to reach a point of financial independence in his adult life, he might also have been able to achieve some sort of emotional and artistic distance from his parents, and the long term effect of his siblings' death might not have been so crippling. But he lived with his parents virtually from the day he was born until his father, and then his mother, died, in 1918 and 1922, respectively. Eleanor Ruggles reports Lindsay as writing, in 1925, "that since his father's and mother's deaths he could give himself no reason for going on" (336). The screenwriter Anita Loos, wrote to this same point concerning her correspondence with Lindsay in August of 1920. She reported Lindsay as having written: "`I know I am a poor thing, but take me as I am and do it at once before it is too late.' Before it is too late: how prophetic those words became in the face of Vachel Lindsay's suicide."[23] In his December 27, 1922 letter to A. J. Armstrong,

[22] Karl Marx, and John C. Raines. *Marx on Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 5-6.
[23] Anita Loos, "A Poet in Love." *Fate Keeps on Happening: Adventures of Lorelei Lee and Other Writings*. Ray Pierre Corsini, Ed. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1984), 165.

Lindsay suggested every moment in his parents' house served as an enforced tutorial in Christian doctrine, from the death of his sisters to the moment of his mother's demise. So, the religious and Christian themes found in Lindsay's texts perhaps reflect more of an editorial compulsion than a choice driven by one's free will, a compulsion driven from the grave. All of Lindsay's major texts carried a heavy overlay of Protestant theology. Given Lindsay's accounts of his home life, one wonders if religious orthodoxy was simply the price he paid for a safe haven, a safe place for an epileptic to hide.

Even his core thematic metaphor, Johnny Appleseed, was portrayed as an itinerant Protestant pastor. The pastor on the frontier would have represented a Protestant ideal for the Campbellite church that Mrs. Lindsay and her family attended. The Campbellites promoted a more primitive or essential form of Christianity, one that emphasized spirituality over doctrine. The Johnny Appleseed metaphor in Lindsay's work would also have addressed the country versus city dichotomy figuratively expressed in Lindsay's Springfield versus Chicago comparisons, an emphasis on the frontier as the core defining feature in America. And it would have signaled another of Lindsay's core beliefs, American exceptionalism. Springfield could be seen as a spiritual frontier as well as a geographical one.

In his early thirties Lindsay had several political artistic successes that brought him international recognition. He was asked to recite his poem "The Wedding of the Lotus and the Rose," which celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal, before President Wilson's cabinet, and copies of the poem were distributed to both houses of

Congress.[24] He published his most famous poem, "The Congo," in 1914, which went a long way towards crediting him with insight into black culture, and his *Art of the Moving Picture* in 1915. Race was a central social theme for Lindsay, and most of his work, including *Art of the Moving Picture*, revolved around race, but not the kind of race we think of in the twenty first century. Lindsay's "art" in the moving picture referred in part to the ability to integrate the new European immigrants into the fabric of American life. *The Art of the Moving Picture* was the first book-length study and critique of film, but more than that, it stands as a statement of Lindsay's philosophy of art, art as a way to impact, guide, and frame civil society. There are few poets or novelists who have ever made a systemic attempt to explain what they were trying to do, and why. Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* attempt stands as a unique statement on multiple levels. So, this study will discuss Lindsay's philosophy of art as a tool for social organization, and then how that philosophy was applied to his poetry and fiction. He only wrote one novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), but he saw that book as his magnum opus, and we will look to that text as the culminating demonstration of his philosophy. The central assumption here is that philosophy precedes action. In this case, I suspect Lindsay's philosophy of art, at least in a working sense, long preceded the actual production of his major works.

Lindsay had a very narrow window of opportunity in which to publish his major works. For the most part, his best and most original texts were published between 1914 and 1920. After the death of his parents, Lindsay went into a long decline that ended

[24] Edgar Lee Masters. *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America* (Cheshire, Connecticut: Biblio and Tannen Publishers, 1962), 222.

with his suicide in 1931. After his parents' death, Lindsay was barely able to support his new wife and children. From 1920 to 1931 most of his new poetry books were composed of re-editions of his prior work. He did work to create a second book of film criticism and an examination of Rudyard Kipling's poetry and prose, but neither of these were finished or published in his lifetime. The last decade of Lindsay's life was a fairly traumatic time for him. He had depended on his parents for the first forty years of his life, and when they had passed his safety net was gone.

The difficulty in understanding Lindsay and his work is in recognizing how heavily he was invested in withholding, controlling, and modifying truth. He had a lot to hide. His family tree was biracial. He was epileptic. He couldn't hold a job. And he really wasn't particularly creative as a poet or novelist. His real forte seemed to be in the creation of a health, racial, class, and literary persona that allowed him to circumvent the social expectations of the day, presenting himself in the best of all possible lights. If Theodore Roosevelt, Jane Addams, Frank Lloyd Wright, Anita Loos, H. L. Mencken, or Sinclair Lewis, people he corresponded with, if they had realized how much his persona was based on withholding information, he would probably have come down to us in an entirely different light.[25] Not that Lindsay wasn't a talented poet or writer. He was talented, but his talent was more in the art of synthesis and collage than original creative work. He had an ability to bring various works and ideas together in a unique way, in such a way that most people never saw the connection to the originals. Most people

[25] Anita Loos was a famous American novelist and screen writer. H. L. Mencken was a literary critic and social commentator. Sinclair Lewis was an award winning novelist.

thought the creations were Lindsay's alone, and they still do. Part of our discussion will focus on how much of Lindsay's literary reputation seems to rest on feet of clay.

You can tell what people think is important by what they try to hide. When Lindsay died, his wife told everyone his death was the result of a heart attack. It was suicide. There was no doubt.[26] But suicide carried a moral stigma that his family sought to hide. Edgar Lee Masters, known for his *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), wrote the first biography of Lindsay, published about three years after Vachel's passing. Masters was a friend of the family. In Edgar Lee Masters' biography, *Vachel Lindsay: a Poet in America* (1935), there was no mention of Lindsay's death as suicide. His death was attributed to heart failure. Herbert Russell, in his biography of Edgar Lee Masters, suggests Masters knew the truth of the suicide but chose to withhold the information from publication (285-86).

The first problem one faces in writing of Vachel Lindsay is something most scholars don't even consider until well into the effort, if then. Virtually all the biographies of Vachel Lindsay are skewed. And I'm only aware of one biography that would meet the test of academic quality. Masters demonstrated a willingness to shield his friend's reputation. There are no footnotes or citations in Eleanor Ruggles's *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (1959). Though wonderfully written, Mildred Weston's *Poet in Exile* (1987) only addressed Lindsay's time in Spokane, Washington, a span of about six years. Mark Harris's *City of Discontent* (1952) could be read as much as a novel as a biography, though it does address Lindsay's cosmopolitan

[26] Herbert K. Russell. *Edgar Lee Masters: A Biography*. Illustrated Edition. (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 285-86.

perspective and interest. Ann Massa's *Vachel Lindsay: Fieldworker for the American Dream* (1970) would qualify as a well-written academic biography, but Massa was English, not American. She viewed race in terms of black and white, and did not demonstrate a grasp of the subtleties of what it meant to be American. Virtually all the biographies viewed race in terms of black and white, ignoring the status of immigrants and the effect of mass immigration on America, and American sensibilities. And these texts form the basis of most accounts of Lindsay, his life and work.

Given the difficulties inherent in the biographies, it should come as no surprise that most accounts of Lindsay's life, and interpretations of his work, are lacking in some regard. If the authors studying Lindsay and his work did not use the biographies themselves, they no doubt referenced studies that did. The difficulty in writing this text was constantly sifting the data, looking for tainted material. Knowing the biographies were tainted, I began this study with the assumption that everything that had been written about Lindsay was also tainted, if only by association. And I was not far wrong in that. I began this study by ignoring the biographies, and by ignoring virtually every secondary account of Lindsay and his work. It was only after this text had been completed that I went back to flesh out my analysis with accounts from the secondary materials that I deemed valid and useful.

The basis of this study is my own analysis and interpretation of the primary texts. In retrospect, that was the best approach to take. I have found no published evidence that anyone ever read and understood Lindsay's major texts in the fullness of their origins and meanings. In terms of both "The Congo" (1914) and *The Golden Book of Springfield*

(1920), Lindsay himself said as much. The misunderstandings and errors surrounding Lindsay and his work were compounded over time, the misunderstandings facilitated by both racial and disciplinary "segregation."

It is difficult for me to believe that there were not and are not scholars who could have seen the direct connection between the work of Vachel Lindsay and Paul Laurence Dunbar. However, the academic reality is that the works of Lindsay and Dunbar are almost never taught by the same scholars in the same classes in the same departments.[27] I write this knowing full well that when I was a graduate student in Literature in the mid 1980s there were no black authors on our reading lists, and I did not read W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) until sometime in the 1990s, long after completing my Masters in American Literature, American History, and Education. These oversights, errors, misunderstandings, and social blinders surrounding the intent and meaning of Lindsay's work have caused Lindsay and his work to be dismissed, forgotten, and ignored. Steven Ross, for example, in his wonderful study of early silent film in America, *Working-Class Hollywood* (1998), made no mention of Vachel Lindsay or his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915).[28] Neither did Susan Courtney in *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation* (2005), or *American Silent Film* (1978) by William Everson.[29] Any of these texts would have represented a natural forum for a discussion of Lindsay and his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). Part of the purpose of this study has been to resurrect

[27] Paul Laurence Dunbar was perhaps the leading poet of the Harlem Renaissance.
[28] Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998).
[29] Susan Courtney, *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race, 1903-1967* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005). William K. Everson, *American Silent Film* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1978).

Lindsay's work from the dust bin of history, allowing modern commentators, for good or for ill, to access his ideas, texts, work, and philosophy. Pursuant to this end, a series of original findings, research, and interpretations, overturning the accepted conventions relating to Vachel Lindsay's poetry and prose, will be presented.

Though Edgar Lee Masters, in a gesture of kindness, withheld the knowledge of Lindsay's suicide, he (Masters) did write that Lindsay fell in love with "an admirable girl in her early twenties" at Gulf Park Community College, in Gulfport, Mississippi, where Lindsay was teaching in 1923 (337). Eleanor Ruggles in her biography of Lindsay, *The West-Going Heart* (1959), suggested the young woman's age was closer to sixteen, at a time when Lindsay would have been forty-three (314, 317). Eleanor Ruggles described Lindsay's perspective on "the Gulf Park maidens" as "sizzling." "He confessed that the older he grew, the younger he liked them" (317). Complaining he was neither sufficiently understood nor appreciated at the College, Lindsay made a very abrupt exit from Gulf Park, moving to Spokane, Washington. Masters treated Lindsay's Gulf Park "affair" as an amicable parting. One wonders about that.

Gaylyn Studlar, in "Oh, 'Doll Devine': Mary Pickford, Masquerade, and the Pedophilic Gaze" (2004), carefully and tentatively suggested that one might look at Lindsay's interest in Mary Pickford as less than benign.[30] Studlar used Lindsay's poem "To Mary Pickford Moving Picture Actress (On Hearing She was Leaving the Moving-

[30] Gaylyn Studlar, "Oh, 'Doll Devine': Mary Pickford, Masquerade, and the Pedophilic Gaze." *The Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. Jennifer M. Bean, and Diane Negra, Eds. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), 360.

Pictures for the Stage)" (1913), and an excerpt from Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), as the basis for her perspective (350, 360). Studlar wrote: "What I do wish to suggest is that Pickford appealed to and through a kind of cultural pedophilia that looked to the innocent child-woman to personify nostalgic ideals of femininity" (360). And Studlar made it clear that the section she cited from *Art of the Moving Picture* repeated a popular and repeatedly published refrain surrounding Mary Pickford at that time: "Why do the People love Mary?" (Lindsay *Art* 35-36). Studlar suggested that impersonating the child-woman both evoked images of eroticism, and simultaneously make them safe and unlikely to be realized. Had Ms. Studlar known of Lindsay's Gulf Park experiences, she might have taken a stronger stance regarding the surreptitious use of film, inciting the pedophile in plain sight.

On a related note, Masters attributed Lindsay's difficulties with women to a fear of syphilis, a lesson instilled in Lindsay by his father (337, 356). Epilepsy, syphilis, and failed love affairs might seem unrelated if one did not understand epilepsy was seen as a hereditary disease at the time, reason enough for a physician to teach his epileptic son to fear sexuality. This of course granting Lindsay's father *was*n't explicitly tying epilepsy and sexuality and heredity. This of course also granting Lindsay and his family had told the story of his life to Masters without distortion, which I doubt.

Eleanor Ruggles dutifully reported Lindsay as having been diagnosed with epilepsy in 1924, but she expressed incredulity over the idea that the family—father, mother, and sisters—had not known of Vachel's epilepsy long before (323-24). I find it highly unlikely that Lindsay's parents and sisters had not known of the disability.

Masters quoted from one of Lindsay's notebooks, dated 1912, concerning "the following plan for writing poems: 'Write poems to conform to popular tunes in the outline of their melody, like 'A Hot Time,' 'After the Ball,' etc., but with a silk finish'" (221). Masters made no suggestion that more than the melody was being taken. As we will see in our discussions, Lindsay blatantly plagiarized. But Masters either did not know that, had not been told that, or withheld that information. Except for the issue of suicide, I suspect Edgar Lee Masters was as in-the-dark as anyone concerning who Lindsay was, what he had done, and how he had done it. Masters was a man Lindsay counted a friend. But the question also raised here is what Lindsay's wife and children knew and what they shared and withheld. How deep did the deception go? People hide things others would censure. And the racial, class, and health critique Lindsay had worked so hard to escape in his lifetime could still have fallen on his children if revealed, and, at least in terms of debt and limited income, it already had.

In writing "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," the poet W. H. Auden noted: "Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry." One could say much the same of Vachel in America. He wasn't so very bad, or evil, but he *would* pretend. He *was* opportunistic, and self aggrandizing, and to a certain extent hypocritical. But I don't really meet so many people who *don't* fall into those categories. He was desperate, and he took his shot, and he was probably insane at the end. Whether he was insane before his leap to suicide or his mental condition was a problem becoming progressively worse as he grew older probably can't be determined almost a hundred years after the fact. But his life was a struggle,

more so than most, with race, class, and disease combining to limit the possibility of success.

Edgar Lee Masters reported Vachel's last words as: "They tried to get me. I got them first" (286). Difficult to know what that meant, but in the last years of his life Vachel had forbidden his father-in-law to set foot in his Springfield home, "on the grounds that Mr. Conner was his enemy and planned to murder him" (Ruggles 424). Certainly knowing that Lindsay was beating his daughter would have caused Mr. Conner distress. But what if a man had married a woman half his age, and failed to tell her of his epilepsy?[31] How would a father feel then? So, maybe Lindsay did murder himself to forestall his enemies. But I'd rather think he acted in an effort to forestall himself. I'd rather think he realized the lies he'd come to embody were unraveling at the seams. Only in the world of the silent movies could you beat your wife without hearing her scream. By the time of his death, he was threatening and accusing Elizabeth, his wife, of very improbable suggestive acts: essentially infidelity (427). I'd like to think he understood the absurdity he had come to personify, and that for the sake of his wife, his children, and his dreams, something had to change, something Socratic, dramatic, in the Greco-Roman style; something involving sacrifice, hemlock, and an all consuming assumption of responsibility.

Henry Louis Gates, in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), writes that "[Ishmael] Reed [in *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972)] is also echoing, and Signifying upon, Vachel Lindsay's ironic

[31] In 1925, the forty-five year old Lindsay married the twenty-three year old Elizabeth Conner.

poem, 'The Congo,' which so (fatally) influenced the Harlem Renaissance poets as Charles T. Davis has shown."[32] Gates's statement seems to attribute more influence to Lindsay's poetry than most other modern literary scholars would grant. But the statement is more muted than it first appears. The reference to "Charles T. Davis" helps mitigate the claim that Lindsay corrupted the Harlem Renaissance single handedly. In *Black is the Color of the Cosmos* (1982), Davis made it clear that Lindsay was only one of many malefactors. However, both Gates and Davis were at least implicitly mistaken in their censure of Lindsay. And they were not alone. Maybe three or four generations of literary scholars have misunderstood the origins of "The Congo," blaming Lindsay for racist caprice where Lindsay saw himself as only addressing the consensus.

Charles Davis grants Paul Laurence Dunbar the defense of a "hostile and challenging" "cultural environment." Dunbar's slow literary development is to be forgiven because he "was born in an age committed to business and industry, and little else. . . ."[33] No such cultural defense was offered Lindsay. Rather Davis suggested a certain maliciousness motivated the unflattering racial characterizations of blacks. That is also the sense one gets from Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972). Nothing would be further from the truth. Lindsay was not mean spirited, though he *was* very much a product of his Age. One could see Lindsay as naive, even sheltered and ill informed, but he wrote of the world he was trained to see; he wrote from the heart of that same hostile

[32] Henry Louis Gates. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 221. "Mumbo Jumbo" is one of the repeated refrains in Vachel Lindsay's poem, "The Congo." Ishmael Reed is a black novelist and poet, and the recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship in 1998.

[33] Charles T. Davis. *Black is the Color of the Cosmos: Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942-1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 126.

and challenging cultural environment Dunbar faced. And if his vision was skewed by the environment, if he was unable to see beyond what he was expected to see, then he traveled in good company. Many well trained and knowledgeable scholars, including Gates, Davis, and Reed, have failed to see the origins of "The Congo" as derivative of the black literature of Lindsay's day. To understand that the basis of "The Congo" is to be found in black literature threatens one's ability to cast aspersions, but it also allows for an awareness of how societies shape, encourage, and constrain ideas. Our discussion will focus on how *both* black and white culture, then and now, contributed to a misunderstanding of Vachel Lindsay's major works.

Henry Louis Gates's perspective on Vachel Lindsay reflects the confusion surrounding Lindsay and his work. In some circles Lindsay is seen as a major literary figure. Harold Bloom, in *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994), lists Lindsay as one of the 159 most influential American literary figures of the last century.[34] Ishmael Reed, for his novel *Mumbo Jumbo*, also makes that list, and it is not surprising that would be the case (535). *Mumbo Jumbo* stands as a mirror image of Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture*, "The Congo," and *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Few who read the texts would miss the parallels. But Reed makes the connection easy for us in writing several poems critiquing Lindsay and his work, the most recent appearing in *From Totem to Hip-hop* (2002), where Reed publishes a parody of Lindsay's "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan" (301). It is no accident that both Lindsay and Reed would

[34] Harold Bloom. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 531.

make Bloom's list. Both authors feed on the same themes. Lindsay's "Congo" allows Reed's rebuttal, maybe demands it. And race lies at the core of both presentations.

Reed and Lindsay's perspectives on race reflect the difference a half century can make. Where Lindsay was very popular in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, he is largely ignored and dismissed today. The fact that someone of Henry Louis Gates's stature could tie Lindsay to the rise and fall of a black American literary movement is noteworthy if only because of the seldom seen attention. Gates's critique reflects the duality in the quality and tone of the criticism of Lindsay's work.

Early in the twentieth century we find the Nobel Prize winning novelist Sinclair Lewis repeatedly singing the praises of Vachel Lindsay. In Sinclair Lewis's novel, *Free Air* (1919), the adventurous protagonist, Milt, praises Lindsay's poems "The Congo" and "The Santa Fe Trail," mentioning Lindsay by name:

> "'Lord!' he cried. 'I didn't know there were books like these! Thought poetry was all like Longfellow and Byron. Old boys. Europe. And rhymed bellyachin' about hard luck. But these books—they're me.'"[35]

Lewis went on to quote from Lindsay's "Santa Fe Trail" at some length. And Lindsay also received an "honorable mention" in the lecture Sinclair Lewis presented in accepting his Nobel Prize.[36] Conversely, Vernon Parrington, in *Main Currents of American Thought* (1927), ignored W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and Booker T. Washington. F. O. Matthiessen's *Oxford Book of American Verse* (1950) praised

[35] Sinclair Lewis. *Free Air* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 97-98.
[36] Horst Frenz, Editor. *Nobel Lectures, Including Presentation Speeches and Laureates' Biographies: Literature 1901-1967* (New York: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1969), 283.

Lindsay for his "exciting use of jazz rhythms" in the introductory essay, while largely ignoring black American poetry.[37]

In his science fiction novel, *Glory Road* (1963), Robert Heinlein made reference to Lindsay's "Congo," without conscious critique. Oscar Gordon, the hero of the novel, unintentionally and unknowingly insulted his host, and, as a part of his penance, he was asked to perform, to demonstrate, some aspect of his native culture before the accumulated audience. Having no musical, dramatic, or intellectual gifts, and being dead drunk at the time, he chose to recite "The Congo." Standing on stage, Oscar Gordon narrated his predicament to the reader, communicating the reception of his performance:

> . . . I couldn't even remember how to ask my way to the men's room [in the language of Nevian]. So I gave it to 'em, both barrels, in English: Vachel Lindsay's 'Congo.'
>
> As much of it as I could remember, say about four pages. What I did give them was the compelling rhythm and rhyme scheme double-talking and faking on any fluffs and really slamming it on "beating on a table with the handle of a broom! Boom! Boom! Boomlay boom!' and the orchestra caught the spirit and we rattled the dishes.
>
> The applause was wonderful and Miss Tiffany [his hostess] grabbed my ankle and kissed it.[38]

[37] Francis Otto Matthiessen. *The Oxford Book of American Verse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), xxx.
[38] Robert A. Heinlein. *The Glory Road* (Riverdale, New York: Baen Publishing, 1996), 95-96.

Oscar's companion, Star, seized the opportunity and freely translated the poem to the gallery, claiming it as an original work of art. Oscar was hailed as an accomplished poet. His reputation was sealed. And his performance was accepted as payment in full, yielding forgiveness for all past errors. The qualities Heinlein praised in the poem are the same qualities Matthiessen praised.

Heinlein couldn't have been more prescient. Granting the fictive nature of the account, the section taken from *The Glory Road* was almost a blow for blow demonstration of how "The Congo" came into being. Ishmael Reed came very close to making the same observation. Reed wrote of "Theodore Dreiser stealing one of Paul Laurence Dunbar's plots" (89). And then, writing of the Mormons: "Did they recruit 1000s of whites to their cause by conjuring the Druids? No, they used material the people were familiar with and added their own" (39). Reed understood Lindsay's technique, without understanding how it applied to "The Congo." Lindsay was never particularly creative. But he was *very* good at seizing upon and synthesizing the popular ideas of his day. Though sensing Lindsay must have drawn from popular culture, critics have never recognized the degree to which Lindsay borrowed, nor the debt of gratitude owed Paul Laurence Dunbar, among others. Ours will be the story of how texts and ideas are turned on their originators and how no one sees or even wants to see the origin of the turn. An analysis of the meaning, content, and origins of Vachel Lindsay's major works will form the basis of our discussion, allowing us to see that far from being original or creative, most of Lindsay's work could never have been anything other than a reflection of his age.

Vachel Lindsay, the American poet, columnist, film theorist, and novelist, published his major works primarily between 1911 and 1923. His three most memorable texts, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), "The Congo" (1914), and *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), focused on the problems raised by immigration, race, gender and ethnicity within the context of a Christian nation. A surprising number of problems seemed tied to these issues at the turn of the century: miscegenation, alcoholism and prohibition, drug use, the role of women in the society, poverty, social Darwinism, the relative hierarchy of culture, lynching, religion, aesthetics, intelligence, passion, political orientation (socialism), and heritage. The sheer number of issues impacting on race, gender, and ethnicity and the complexity of those variables suggest these were social constructions. Anna Stubblefield, in *Race Along the Color Line* (2005), supports the perspective of race as a social construction:

> What makes a person count to other people around him in a particular place at a particular time as being of a particular race is a matter of social custom particular to that time and place and its history. Many readers will understand that when I make this claim, I am endorsing the idea that race is a social construction.[39]

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, in *Racial Formation in the United States* (1994), argue this same sense of social construction:

> The effort must be made to understand race as an unstable and "decentered" complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by

[39] Anna Stubblefield. *Ethics Along the Color Line* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 3.

> political struggle. With this in mind, let us propose a definition: *race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies*. . . . [S]election of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process [italics in original] (55).

Lindsay constructed his own more inclusive definitions of race, gender, and ethnicity, and we will look at his work from that frame.

Lindsay was no disinterested party to the issues of the day. He had an agenda. And his agenda tended to support a white, Protestant, middle-class, conservative American perspective, with some deviations. Though a tall, white, strikingly handsome, brown haired man, Lindsay was not pure white. In an era where one drop of Negro blood defined one's race, being less than lily white presented problems.[40] Both Lindsay and his family acknowledged an American Indian influence. In a letter to Harriet Monroe, dated June 18, 1926, Lindsay wrote:

> Because I am Blonde, people do not even suspect I am an Indian and Spaniard inside and I was told I was of Spanish Blood on my mother's side, far oftener than I was told to be good [sic] (Chenetier 367).

Ron Sakolsky, in his "Introduction" to a reprint of Vachel Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield* (1999), quite correctly notes that intermarriage between American Indians

[40] As Thomas Dixon Jr. wrote, over and over again, in his many novels from the turn of the 1900s, "One drop of Negro blood makes a negro" (*The Leopard's Spots* 335). The title of Dixon's novel makes Biblical reference to the unchanging nature of race. Jeremiah 13:23 reads, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots." Thomas Dixon, Jr. *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden—1865-1900* (Gretna, Louisiana: A Firebird Press Book, 2001), 335.

and escaped black slaves was well documented. Sakolsky writes: "And if Lindsay himself, by dint of some Ishmaelite heritage of his own, has a claim to African ancestry, then we must reevaluate 'The Congo' accordingly (xxxiv-xxxv). If Lindsay *was* black, then his own critique of black Americans, in "The Congo," carries a tinge of hypocrisy, a demonstration of an individual's attempt to escape the social construction of race in the condemnation of others.

The problem with the critical commentary on Lindsay's work today is the same as it would have been ninety years ago. The commentary reflects the belief that everything is known; and that all that is required is the politically correct response. The only thing that is believed to have changed in the passage of years is the definition of political correctness itself. Today overt racism is seen as ignorant and in bad taste; in Lindsay's day that same racism was seen as a reflection of the reality, but nobody, then or today, looked at the origin and basis of Lindsay's work in a serious and scholarly way. Who today would risk their career on the study of a second rate poet, one advocating a racist agenda? It was not *only* Lindsay who saw what he was trained to see. This myopia reflects a social phenomenon. Gates's critique of Lindsay for casting aspersions on black culture could be turned to a criticism of every scholar who has ever praised "The Congo" (1914), *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), or *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), Lindsay's three major works. The information necessary to see what was really happening with Lindsay's poetry and prose has always been there, but it would have required scholars to devote time to an unpopular topic and cross disciplinary boundaries

that have become increasingly inviolate in order to access and understand what Lindsay was about.

There are good reasons for the creation of disciplinary boundaries. There are good reasons for sub boundaries within disciplines. Disciplinary focus keeps one from looking silly in front of the world. Specialization allows for an exactitude that can't be duplicated across larger frames of knowledge, if only because of the sheer volume of information. A lifetime spent studying the economic history of rubber grants one a certain credibility on the topic, but it also limits the very idea of a larger "understanding." Lewis Mumford in *The Pentagon of Power* (1964) writes that "to know more and more about less and less. . ." is ultimately "simply to know less."[41] The state of Lindsay scholarship begs the question: is that scholarship about being "politically correct," or is it about reaching for an "understanding" of the subtleties of race and how "race" was constructed? Gates and, by implication, Davis were at least partially mistaken in their assessment of Lindsay and his racial focus, but they were right in trying to reach beyond the known for an understanding. In that sense they were even courageous. It takes courage to place oneself in public view for everyone to critique. The philosopher Anna Stubblefield, in her book *Ethics Along the Color Line* (2005), writes that ". . . challenging white supremacy is always punished in some way or other" (6).

In the early 1980s when I stood for my orals in American Literature at Miami University, Vachel Lindsay was still on the departmental reading list, though I received

[41] Lewis Mumford. *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1964), 181.

no questions nor took any courses that ever referred to his work. At the community college where I now teach, Vachel Lindsay is still listed among the recommended authors for the American Literature II sections, though in my twenty-five year tenure, I know of no one who has ever taught Lindsay at the college. And I can understand why he wouldn't be taught. In focusing on race, religion, and the application of film as a form of mind control, Lindsay's work stands as a demonstration of the things the twenty first century would rather forget. Americans have little patience for accounts of those who no longer exist. Where reality is perceived only as it is defined, racism, religious intolleration, and mind control are topics that concerned other people in another era, memories irrelevant to those inhabiting the land of the brave and the home of the free. My students tell me this all the time: "Racism is a thing of the past;" "Americans are all equal and free;" "Money is the only reality." I've come to believe my job description must have a hidden line defining my role as "confronting banality."

In addition to the problem of political incorrectness, there's the problem of complexity, interpreting the past from a present that no one wants to leave. Like Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* (1952), Vachel Lindsay's poetry and prose are both too complex and too simple for casual review. How do you explain courage or determination where they are not already understood? Like Hemingway's, Lindsay's work clashes with contemporary sensibilities. I have sat on hiring committees where candidates who wrote dissertations on Hemingway were summarily excused. There is a politics to the study of literature that guides one's professional choices. I suspect the

politics of career choice has contributed to the exclusion and misunderstanding of Lindsay and his work. Fortunately, I already have tenure.

Part of our discussion will revolve around the "why" of the misunderstandings surrounding Lindsay and his work. Ishmael Reed used Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" to define political incorrectness in the late twentieth century. Lindsay portrayed blacks as drunken savages in his poem. But, Lindsay's "Congo" can be seen as an artifact of the popular culture of his day. The origins and derivations of the poem reveal not only the clash and synthesis surrounding the idea of "race," but how that clash of ideas attained a pejorative synthesis that perpetuated itself through time. In his poem, Lindsay saw himself as supporting the aspirations of the black race. Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* is a pointed refutation of that conceit.

In *Race in North America* (1999), Audrey Smedley describes her study as being inspired by the sociology of knowledge (16). I make the same claim for this dissertation. The sociology of knowledge, social constructionism, and symbolic interactionism all inform this work. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966) has been the most well read text in my library, to the point that both covers have been torn and re-taped and every page filled with annotations in multiple shades of ink. Erving Goffman's *Asylums* (1961) and Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) have also influenced the tenor of the text.

Audrey Smedley suggests her work might *look* like an unorthodox history, but she cautions us to read it as an "analytic study" instead.[42] I could say the same. In large part, the decision to employ an analytical model was driven by the questionable nature of the biographical material. As with *Race in North America*, this dissertation might appear to be an unorthodox history, sociology and history being closely allied. But the intent of this text is to unpack the symbols and explain their meaning and derivations, to focus on Vachel Lindsay's most famous works in four genres, short story, novel, poetry, and prose, "The Golden Faced People," *The Golden Book of Springfield*, "The Congo," and *The Art of the Moving Picture*, in order to tease out their derivations and intent. Lindsay's texts are very deceptive. They are not what they seem. And Lindsay *intended* a sleight-of-hand technique. However, when one begins to understand the symbolic nature of the texts one begins to see Lindsay in a new light; one begins to see Lindsay as a social reformer, activist, and even revolutionary.

Lindsay did what any aikido master does. He wrapped himself in the expected, with deceptive intent. Chameleon-like, an aikido master will attempt to hide in plain sight, concealing his expertise, training, and confidence behind the appearance of diffidence and fear. In aikido one sheds the trappings of pride, braggadocio, and indignation to encourage an adversary to a casual misstep, to the belief in easy victory, until it is too late. One's opposition is encouraged to see only the expected, to enhance the surprise at that point where expectation meets reality. Battle is the conflict of expectations, the point where symbols collide. In that same sense, a pencil is a weapon

[42] Audrey Smedley. *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), 14.

by another name, and a handful of dust can blind. The social expectation of a pencil is benign, but that expectation can be turned on one's opponent. The basis of Lindsay's rhetorical technique was to turn an expectation back on itself. The image conjures memories of my grandfather Jesus, ensconced in front of his television. I always saw him as an itinerant aikido master, hiding in plain sight, a five foot three, eighty five pound covert warrior, fighting his battles with a deceptive complacency, as if he accepted his place on the couch and in life.

The problem with rhetorical battles of hypothetical proficiency is that one can imagine anything. In his imagination, Lindsay bested all comers, lulling audiences to complacency, with no need to convince. To paraphrase Robert Sklar, Lindsay wanted his audience to wake-up one morning embracing his beliefs, without ever having made the intellectual effort necessary in order to understand their own conversion (Stone ix). That was Lindsay's sense of the "propaganda" value inherent in film: a magical miracle cure compelling the dissident to belief. However, in disguising his message as accepted belief, most often he only encouraged his readers to a self-righteous complacency. Lindsay always saw himself as offering blacks, women, and other Americans the hope of social inclusion. But most audiences saw him as supporting the racial and gender divide. Lindsay wrote ambiguously, a rhetorical consequence of intended disguise.

All scholarship is—or ought to be—a kind of intellectual autobiography. This book [*No Place of Grace* (1981)] is no exception. I originally felt drawn to antimodernists because I shared their discontent with modern culture: its crackpot obsession with efficiency, its humanist hubris, its complacent creed of progress. . . . I concluded that the most powerful critics of capitalism have often looked backward rather than forward, directing their fire at the bureaucratic "rationality" common to all corporate systems, indicting capitalist progress for its corrosive impact on family, craft, community, or faith. . . . Antecedents of my own quest for an "authentic," independent point of view; the more thoughtful antimodernists remind us of what left critics too often forget: in a society dedicated to economic development and "personal growth" at the expense of all larger loyalties, conservative values are too important to be left to pseudo-conservative apologists for capitalism. In our time, the most profound radicalism is often the most profound conservatism.

T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace* (xx).

Chapter II

A Harmless Drudge:

Vachel Lindsay and his *Art of the Moving Picture*[43]

Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) presented a line of argumentation analogous to the story of the man who lost his keys.[44] A man walks out of a bar one night, drops his keys somewhere in the dark and begins searching for them under the nearest streetlamp. "Where did you lose your keys?" He was asked. "I lost them in the dark," he answered. "Then why are you looking here?" "You're right; there's a better light where I parked." As both Kuhn and the story suggest, there is a certain logic to looking for the keys in a place where there *is* enough light, rather than

[43] In his one of a kind dictionary, Samuel Johnson characterized himself as a harmless drudge.
[44] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Third Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

wasting one's time groping in the dark. Without the light to see by, one might spend a lifetime groping on one's hands and knees and still not find the keys. But the upside to groping in the dark is that you're just as apt to find what you didn't need, which might actually be of more value than the lost keys.

Vachel Lindsay has been dismissed as silly, foolish, illogical, suicidal, and insane. And he could be and certainly was all of those things at one time or another. But I have also been all of those things at one time or another, and so have you. The logical flaw to be found in the popular critique of Lindsay is the ad hominem argument. Lindsay *was* unusual, but that does not speak to the issues. For almost forty years, the film critic Stanley Kauffmann has been the voice introducing Vachel Lindsay's most famous text, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). Kauffmann's has been the most easily accessible version of Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture*, and arguably the most dismissive. Kauffmann introduced Lindsay to us as a "fool," influencing at least a generation of scholars.[45] Lindsay's second most famous text, his poetic study of the Negro race, "The Congo" (1914), has been damned by virtually everyone as obscure and racist, and as a consequence ignored. Racist *and* foolish are seldom the reasons scholars cite for sitting under a reading lamp, devoting long hours to understanding a text in depth.

Virtually everything Lindsay wrote has been dismissed, with very little critical scrutiny. Lindsay's poem "The Jazz Bird" could stand as a case in point. Everyone who has commented on "The Jazz Bird" has seen the poem as racist, and they hammer that point to the exclusion of almost everything else. But no one has ever written a critique of

[45] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Introduction by Stanley Kauffmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), ix.

that poem showing how Lindsay qualified, mitigated, and directed that racist tinge in ways that actually supported the rights of black Americans. People seize the expected because the expected *is* lying out in plain sight, and finding the expected in plain sight can seem a much more efficient use of one's time than groping around in the dark for unexpected understanding.

In the film version of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Glenda the Good made a point of reminding Dorothy that it was "always best to begin from the beginning," and that seemed good advice. We begin this study of Lindsay's work with *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), because that is the place to begin. This was not the chronological beginning of Lindsay's literary career, but it was the philosophical beginning. One does not find a more holistic or consistent statement of Lindsay's purpose and philosophy than *The Art of the Moving Picture*. *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), Lindsay's only novel, and the subject of the fourth chapter of this dissertation, is little more than a demonstration of the discussion found in *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Theoretically, Lindsay's famous study of the "Negro Race," "The Congo" (1914), *could* be read and understood without reference to *The Art of the Moving Picture*, but I was unable to do so. The analysis of "The Congo" found in the third chapter of this dissertation is the only study to correctly interpret the poem's intent, purpose, origins, and meaning, and I couldn't have done that without having first read *The Art of the Moving Picture*.

The *Art of the Moving Picture* is the place to begin any study of Lindsay's work. An understanding of Lindsay's philosophy helps in the interpretation of "The Congo" because *The Art of the Moving Picture* communicates Lindsay's sense of the mutability

of race, how race was *not* the last word in defining a person. Without this background material, one cannot understand why Lindsay felt he was supporting the ideals of the black race in the poem. We *will* argue that Lindsay was racist. But we will temper that perspective with Lynn Hunt's observations on presentism. Lynn Hunt, past president of the American Historical Association (2002), suggested virtually everybody in Lindsay's day was racist.[46] I see Lindsay as racist, but no more so than most of his contemporaries.

Every chapter in this text will overturn almost a century of conventions that have accumulated around Vachel Lindsay and his work. This author makes no claim to being the most intelligent student or scholar. He makes no claim to being the best read or the most insightful. This author attributes what success he has had to his methodology, to his focus on the primary texts. This author suggests that he may have been the only person in recent memory to actually read Lindsay's primary works without having been saddled with the preconceptions of prior generations. There can be a benefit to ignorance when armed with the tools to read and interpret for one's self, to read and understand what has been said and meant in the idiom of the day.

A study emphasizing the aesthetics of Plato's *Death of Socrates* might be construed as an attempt to conceal the issue of treason in the text. Socrates was executed for undermining the Athenian democracy. Clyde Taylor, a professor of literature and film, applied the same argument to *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Taylor wrote:

[46] Lynn Hunt, "Against Presentism," *Perspectives* 40 (May 2002): 7-9.

> My argument is that the aesthetic celebration of Griffith's blockbuster movie is another scene where the ideological determination of aesthetic discourse is at work—and that the aesthetic not only conceals its alliance with ideological motivations, as it always must, but that in the specific instance of Griffith's movie it works to suppress important social meanings which become clearer when seen within the framework of the politics of media representation.[47]

Taylor argued the issue of race was suppressed within the emphasis on aesthetics. Every review or study of *The Art of the Moving Picture* that I have read has focused on Lindsay's approach to the aesthetics of film. Every review or study of the text that I have read came from those trained in film, film criticism, or communication. No surprise, every study critiqued *The Art of the Moving Picture* on the grounds of aesthetics. People find what they are trained to see. It is easier to look for the textural keys in the light of one's own understanding. We will focus on the context, philosophy, assumptions and basis of Lindsay's argumentation.

In English there is a very simple rhetorical test for meaning and primacy in both the written and spoken word. The important statements are supposed to be placed at the beginning and end of sentences, chapters, sections, and texts. This is why students are taught to skim a text by focusing on the introductions and conclusions to chapters and books. The rhetorical expectation is that an emphatic message will be positioned at the

[47] Clyde Taylor, "The Re-Birth of the Aesthetic in Cinema." *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*. Daniel Bernardi, Editor. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 17.

end of a statement. Applying this simple rule of thumb to *The Art of the Moving Picture* leads one to note that the first half of Lindsay's book emphasizes aesthetics, while the second half was devoted to social construction, how film could be used to create a nation, and this discussion of nation-building mostly related to the issue of race and class.

The respected American film critic, Stanley Kauffmann, in his "Introduction" to *The Art of the Moving Picture* (2000), emphasized aesthetics. Glenn Wolfe, in his book, *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (1973), emphasized aesthetics.[48] Paula Cohen in *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth* (2001) repeatedly *quoted* Lindsay with the assumption that he was addressing aesthetics, ignoring the fact that he addressed and emphasized the very social construction issues she addressed in *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth*. Five decades after Lindsay appears to have already done so, she credited the film theorist Christian Metz with being the first to apply Saussurian linguistics to film (11). The issue here is that she would never have guessed Lindsay applied Saussure's philosophy to film because she assumed he was addressing aesthetics. You can read Saussure in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, but you have to read that text with an open mind. Lindsay did not use citations. But if you've read Saussure and then

[48] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*, "Introduction" by Stanley Kauffmann (New York: Random House, 2000). Paula Marantz Cohen, *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Glenn Wolfe, *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (New York: Arno Press, 1973). Laurence Goldstein's *American Poet at the Movies* (1995) devotes a chapter to Vachel Lindsay and his *Art of the Moving Picture*. Goldstein focused mostly on the role women played in both silent film and in Lindsay's perspective of film. Laurence Goldstein, *The American Poet at the Movies: A Critical History* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 19-35.

read *Art of the Moving Picture*, free of Kauffmann's sense of Lindsay's "foolishness," then you find Saussure staring back out at you from Lindsay's prose (Lindsay 119).[49]

Paula Cohen addressed Lindsay's work as an aside. She was not always wrong in her assessment of Vachel Lindsay and his *Art of the Moving Picture*, but she was mistaken as often as not. When she *was* mistaken, it was because she assumed Lindsay was writing of aesthetics and not social construction. The emphasis on aesthetics is the perspective one would get if one read the most accessible edition of *The Art of the Moving Picture* gracing bookshelves for virtually the last forty years, Stanley Kauffmann's. Cohen, like Lindsay, expressed a preference for *silent* film (18). In this she reversed Stanley Kauffmann's perspective on the use of sound in film. Kauffmann noted that: "His [Lindsay's] animus against the musical accompaniment of silent films (he thought people should converse while watching pictures) is sheer quirk. . . . His ideas on the sound-film. . . are as unimaginative as most of the book is visionary" (xii). Cohen was partially right in noting Lindsay's aesthetic preference for silent film. Lindsay's preference for silent film was *also* an aesthetic consideration. But it was primarily an argument for social construction. Kauffmann correctly noted Lindsay wanted people to converse during the showing of the film. What neither Kauffmann nor Cohen understood was that this was not "quirk," nor passing fancy, but a well considered effort to create a community that could compete with and stand in opposition to the saloon. Lindsay did not *just* prefer silent film. He wanted to cultivate that silence as an opportunity for community-building conversation. And Lindsay was not alone in this.

[49] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 113.

Rebecca Zurier, the art historian and interdisciplinary scholar who wrote *Picturing the City* (2006), called attention to John Sloan's painting "Movies, Five Cents" (1907) to illustrate an audience viewing a film while sitting in obvious conversation with one another. Zurier wrote that the rules of audience behavior "had to be learned."[50] These rules of behavior were not written in stone nor were they automatically adopted. They were negotiated, and Lindsay was a part of that negotiation, contesting the issue from the pages of his *Art of the Moving Picture*:

> The fan at the photoplay, as at the baseball grounds, is neither a low-brow nor a high-brow. He is an enthusiast who is as stirred by the charge of the photographic cavalry as by the home runs that he watches from the bleachers. In both places he has the privilege of comment while the game goes on (*Art* 134).

The historian Roy Rosenzweig, in *Eight Hours for What We Will* (1983), noted that: "The 'silence' that descended over bourgeois public behavior in the nineteenth century did not also blanket working-class public life. Modes of conviviality, active sociability, and liveliness remained the norms for the working class."[51] Rosenzweig went on to enumerate a series of social activities, disdained by the middle class, that were common in movie theatres: "eating, drinking, sleeping, necking," "bike racing," "singing," "gossiping," and "wrestling." "Overall, then, moviegoing was far from the passive experience that some critics accused it of being" (202-03). Steven Ross, in

---

[50] Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2006), 63-65.
[51] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 199.

Working-Class Hollywood, wrote that movie theatres were "filled with talking, yelling, fighting, singing, and lots of laughter. Movie theatres were places where people could recapture the sense of aliveness that had been lost in the regimented factories of the era."[52]

For forty years Kauffmann introduced readers to *The Art of the Moving Picture* and Vachel Lindsay. But Kauffmann did not understand what Lindsay was writing about. Part of the problem was that Kauffman's early editions clearly relied on the biographers of Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters and Eleanor Ruggles. Kauffmann wrote: "Edgar Lee Masters. . . disparages *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Eleanor Ruggles. . . does not deal with it in any significant way."[53] Kauffmann was not so much a scholar as a critic. He needed guidance in order to understand the text. But neither Masters nor Ruggles were scholars either, and they offered virtually no useful guidance. The biographers were not positioned to be able to bring light to the topic, enabling the perpetual repetition of misunderstandings.

Even in the work of the cinema scholar Paula Cohen, we see basic misunderstandings perpetuated. Kauffmann emphasized Lindsay's contribution to aesthetics, virtually ignoring, as did both Edgar Lee Masters and Eleanor Ruggles, Lindsay's emphasis on social construction. That same tendency can be seen in Paula Cohen's *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth*. Cohen cited the influence of film on race, with no reference to Vachel Lindsay (17). Lindsay's first ever text on film

---

[52] Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 24.
[53] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Introduction by Stanley Kauffmann (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), x.

emphasized race; it was an attempt to address the problem of integrating immigrants into the fabric of American life. Insofar as film criticism is often said to have begun with *The Art of the Moving Picture*, film criticism can be seen to have begun with Lindsay's attempt to address race. But that connection largely escaped the notice of Kauffman, Wolfe, and Cohen. Part of the problem was that Lindsay expected his readers to address his source material, a responsibility few accepted.

I have read no studies or accounts of *The Art of the Moving Picture* that emphasize race as the topic of discussion. Glenn Wolfe's *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* mentions "race" three times in the entire text, but each reference is a quote from Vachel Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture*. Wolfe did not expand on the topic of race in Lindsay's text. He did not address the meaning of race that emerged from Lindsay's text. I should note here that Wolfe's text was informative and well done, but it focused on the study of aesthetics in Lindsay's text to the virtual exclusion of other perspectives.

Race was one of the basic assumptions underlying Lindsay's argument for community. The creation of community was the central theme of the text. Lindsay did discuss aesthetics, at some length, but the discussion of aesthetics was an attempt to relate *how* one should go about addressing the creation of community through the use of film. Kauffmann, among others, simply didn't understand the context of Lindsay's statements well enough to interpret his message. Kauffmann writes: "His [Lindsay's] chapter on the screen as a possible substitute for the saloon can only be seen—with utmost charity—as the view of a man who worships Dionysus in his own way. And this catalogue of

oddities is not complete" (xii).[54] Kauffmann did not understand that *Substitutes for the Saloon* (1901) was a contemporary study on how and why the saloon perpetuated itself, particularly in urban areas favored by the new American immigrants.[55] Lindsay mirrored *Substitutes for the Saloon*, making that one of his chapter titles, precisely in order to demonstrate the credibility of his position. That Lindsay would mirror a chapter on the title of a relevant study does not speak to the issue of "oddities," nor require a "charitable" explanation, but it does demonstrate how Kauffmann, a film critic primarily interested in aesthetics, could misinterpret an author's clear intent. Projecting his interest in aesthetics onto *The Art of the Moving Picture* enabled Kauffmann to ignore the social, historical and literary context Lindsay worked within. Kauffmann saw what he wanted to see, what he expected to see, and everything else was just "foolish."

The same argument could be built around the cover title of Lindsay's text: *The Art of the Moving Picture*. The drama critic, Clayton Hamilton, wrote an article entitled "Art of the Moving Picture Play" (1911) that introduced many of the same themes found in Lindsay's text. Both works addressed pantomime, the relative value of traditional theatre versus screenplays, the advantage of film in portraying the out-of-doors, the comparison of architecture-as-art to film-as-art, and the idea of translating popular film into high art.[56] The conversion of popular film to high art was one of the major themes to be found

[54] This quote comes from Stanley Kauffmann's 2000 edition of *The Art of the Moving Picture*, but the same quote can be found in the 1970 edition, on page xviii.
[55] Raymond Calkins, *Substitutes for the Saloon: An Investigation made for the Committee of Fifty under the Direction of Francis G. Peabody, Elgin R. L. Gould and William M. Sloane* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1901).
[56] Clayton Hamilton, "The Art of the Moving Picture Play." *Bookman* (January 1911), 512-16. The article also appears as a chapter in Clayton Hamilton's *Studies in Stagecraft*. Clayton Hamilton, "XXI The Art of the Moving Picture Play." *Studies in Stagecraft* (London: H. Holt and Company, 1914), 225-39.

in Lindsay's text, a concept reflected in his discussions of the "higher photoplay" (95). Apparently, this was also one of the claims D. W. Griffith made. "[I]n 1913, D. W. Griffith took out a full page advertisement in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* touting himself as the `producer of all great Biography successes,' responsible for `revolutionizing motion picture drama and the founding of the modern technique of the art.'"[57] It would have taken careful scholarship to find Hamilton's article, probably something more than a film critic such as Stanley Kauffmann was trained to do, but this is part of the issue. Kauffmann needed guidance, and in finding little or none he was left to his own devices. His talents lay in critical review, not in understanding scholarly antiquities. Because of this, the misunderstandings were perpetuated, year after year.

One of the lost keys to *The Art of the Moving Picture*, and also Lindsay's poetry, was the work of the philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle. In the early nineteen eighties, at a time when there were no black authors on my orals list in Literature at Miami University, Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1831) remained on that list. Lindsay explicitly mentioned Carlyle in his *Art of the Moving Picture* (181). But even setting this aside, even setting aside the hero based philosophy of Lindsay's text, anyone who had read *Sartor Resartus* or *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) would have seen Carlyle's influence in the chapter titles of Lindsay's "Table of Contents." Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII were titled "The Motion Picture of Fairy Splendor," "The Picture of Crowd Splendor," "The Picture of Patriotic Splendor," and "The Picture of Religious Splendor," respectively. Neither *Sartor Resartus* nor *On*

[57] Robert E. Pearson, *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1992), 10.

Heroes can be read without noting Carlyle's repeated use of the word "splendor." "Splendor" was to Carlyle as "sublime" was to the Lake Poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.[58] "Splendor" referred to the God-like spiritual content imminent in a work or act. *The Art of the Moving Picture* emphasized the quality of the spiritual that should be projected in film. Lindsay's catch phrase, the "prophet wizards," which no doubt sounds as "foolish" to us today as it did to Kauffmann when he wrote his introduction to *The Art of the Moving Picture*, can be read as a catchy paraphrase on Carlyle's "hero-prophet."[59] Carlyle was explicitly mentioned only once in Lindsay's text (*Art* 181). But unless one started with the assumption that Lindsay was incapable of reading Scottish philosophers, *The Art of the Moving Picture* seems a text indebted to Carlyle. That without even getting into the connections between Carlyle, Lindsay, and his poem "The Congo." Chapter 3.6.IV of Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837) was entitled "Mumbo-Jumbo," the repeated refrain in probably the most famous of Vachel Lindsay's poems: "The Congo." "Mumbo-Jumbo," within the context of Carlyle's *French Revolution* meant the willingness to deceive one's self and the willingness to slaughter in the name of a craven image, which at least in part was what Lindsay was alluding to in his poem.[60]

Lindsay read eclectically. Though he never graduated, he was educated in a church school, Hiram College, affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, one of the

[58] William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Eolian Harp" would be representative examples of their use of "sublime."
[59] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*. John Adams, Editor. Fifth Edition (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), 39, 75, 105. Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdrockn* (New York: Collier, 1897).
[60] Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1909), 345.

denominations Lindsay claimed as his own (Wolfe 66). It would have been natural for a church school to promote the work of a religiously oriented historian like Carlyle. However, having said that, it would have also been possible to discover Carlyle's philosophy through the work of the poet John Ruskin. Ruskin was seen as a protégé and "disciple" of Thomas Carlyle.[61] The author of *Ruskin: A Study in Personality* (1911), Arthur Benson, quotes John Ruskin as having written:

> Had you ever read ten words of mine with understanding, you would have known that I care no more either for Mr. D'Israeli or Mr. Gladstone than for two old bagpipes with the drones going by steam, but that I hate all liberalism, as I do Beelzebub, and that, with Carlyle, I stand, we two alone now in England, for God and the Queen.[62]

Lindsay would have read from John Ruskin's work. Whether Lindsay read Carlyle through the work of John Ruskin or Carlyle in the original texts is not so important as grasping the idea that Carlyle's philosophy stood at the base of Lindsay's perspective on art, literature, and film.

Both Lindsay and Carlyle focused on the spirituality inherent in art and literature. Much of the philosophy that Lindsay articulated in *Art of the Moving Picture* could be seen as an application of Romanticism, his artist as prophet or artist as hero theme being only one example. Lindsay had certainly read both Whitman and Emerson, both American literary icons who embraced the romantic tradition. And both Emerson and

---

[61] Benjamin Evans Lippincott, *Victorian Critics of Democracy: Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Stephen, Maine, Lecky* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1964), 2.
[62] Arthur Christopher Benson, *Ruskin: A Study in Personality* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 232.

Whitman articulated the "artist as unique individual" theme. Though I have never seen Lindsay reference the German Romantics, this would also be a possibility. But applying Occam's razor to the question of the origins of Lindsay's artistic perspective suggests the work of Thomas Carlyle. Lindsay would have found all of his major ideas in the pages of Carlyle's history, philosophy, and fiction. Lindsay's emphasis and perspective on the need for chivalry, heroism and religion, his jaundiced view of democracy and the mob, the need for revolution and the necessarily conservative nature of the coming revolution—the theme of Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield*—all can be found in the pages of Carlyle.

Lindsay did correspond with contemporary philosophers or authorities on urban culture. He knew and wrote to Jane Addams and Theodore Roosevelt, but it is not really clear that the ideas of Hull House or the one time President ever deeply impacted his work. Rather I suspect Lindsay viewed Addams and Roosevelt within the tenets of his own social and religious beliefs. Lindsay corresponded with W. E. B. Du Bois, black American scholar and activist. As with most of his acquaintances, Lindsay had a particularly sharp break with Du Bois. Du Bois was incensed over Lindsay's depiction of blacks in "The Congo."

I doubt Lindsay ever knew the psychologist William James. And I suspect that if the opportunity to speak with James had ever presented itself, Lindsay would probably have removed himself from the mix. Close proximity to a prominent psychologist would have presented the possibility that someone would analyze or judge him, and when Lindsay felt he was being judged he stopped talking and began shouting. I doubt James

would have been impressed with that. Though Lindsay was always very interested in politics, I suspect he had little more than a passing knowledge of Eugene Debs, the union organizer, or the sociologist John Dewey. But these probably would have been names Stanley Kauffmann would have recognized. Though Lindsay was born within Carlyle's lifetime, a century or more would have separated the productive lives of Carlyle and Kauffmann, reason enough to overlook such a connection.

It would be a mistake to attribute too much blame to Kauffmann for the perpetuated mistakes of the past. Though flip, he was probably well meaning, and he was only one writer, even though he probably *did* predispose one or two generations of scholars to casually dismiss Lindsay's work; but that also bespeaks Thomas Kuhn and the sense of generations of scholars searching under the streetlamps for what was lost in the dark, rather than doing what scholars are trained to do: question the known.

The historian Benjamin Lippincott portrayed Carlyle's as the once and future philosophy. Not only was it a program that emphasized the role of chivalric heroes, such as King Arthur, but it also idealized tyrants such as Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte. Lippincott portrayed Carlyle as a kind of proto fascist, a nineteenth century philosopher who lay the twentieth century foundations for Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy: "fascism is to a great extent Carlyle's creed brought up to date" (18).

> Carlyle is of the twentieth century above all because the remedy he urged as a cure for the disorder of the liberal middle-class state is the remedy

> practiced in Italy and Germany. Carlyle stood for fascist ideas fifty years before their advent (47).

Carlyle saw the rise of class antagonisms and the rise of poverty as indicative of the failure of moral order: "in his view the great defect of industrialism, apart from the poverty and injustice it creates, is its failure to establish any bond between employer and employee save that of the cash nexus" (41). His goal was to find a way to reassert order, creating unity and community. For these reasons, Carlyle's histories might just as well be called philosophies. His histories were attempts to show the path to the reassertion of order. But they were closer to being historical fictions than what the twenty first century would call "History."

Carlyle wrote outside the conventions of historical narrative. His *French Revolution* (1837) was written in the present tense. The idea was to emphasize the mythic or constructed nature of history. And history is always a perspective on the past from the present. The literary historian Chris R. Vanden Bossche cited Roland Barthes's "Discourse on History" in support of Carlyle's mythic first person approach to the past: "using the third person and past tense to make history seem to 'speak itself'—creates the illusion of objectivity by treating the past as fixed and the narrator's interpretation of it as exhaustive."[63] Vanden Bossche argued the perspective that Carlyle's present tense approach to history was a more honest depiction of the past (65). "Carlyle's use of present-tense narration collapses the distance between past and present, emphasizing that meaning is not fixed in the past but is always in the process of being made" (66). Carlyle

[63] Chris R. Vanden Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 64.

wrote a creative history, the history he thought should have been. He wrote to illustrate the predicament of the present, and Lindsay did the same. Lindsay created retrospectives of historical figures in order to speak to the needs of the present. He was not so much concerned with what did happen, but rather with what should have happened and how those people and events depicted *should* be seen.

Lindsay wrote a whole series of poems about famous people, mostly famous Americans: "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," "The Booker Washington Trilogy," "The Eagle that is Forgotten," "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan," just to name a few, and even "The Congo" could fall within this category, insofar as that poem was dedicated to the missionary Ray Eldred. "The Congo" created an obviously "visionary," fictional, and prehistoric past in order to explain the present. Lindsay made little attempt to depict people and events as they were. He depicted them as he felt they should be seen. This was part of the sense Lindsay imputed to "propaganda" in *The Art of the Moving Picture*. The films Lindsay held up as exemplary in *Art of the Moving Picture*—"*Birth of a Nation*," "*Judith of Bethulia*," "*Enoch Arden*," among others—carried this same sense of the past speaking to the present. *Birth of a Nation* was based on a novel by Thomas Dixon. *Enoch Arden* was based on a poem by Alfred Tennyson. These films represented literary depictions of the past, speaking to larger truths and events. Both Lindsay and Carlyle spoke to a spiritual truth and a spiritual sense of how society should be ordered.

Carlyle tailored his sources and depiction of events to his sense of the social dilemma facing his day and age. His history of *The French Revolution* focused on the

collapse of modernity, the collapse of the natural order of things. Carlyle saw both the French and American Revolutions as a cumulative result or sign of the continuing collapse of moral authority in the eighteenth century. He saw the rise of democracy as the natural result of a lack of authority, but not the *end* result and not a negative occurrence in and of itself. Democracy was just the preliminary step, and a necessary one, in the reassertion of moral authority. Carlyle saw democracy as the harbinger of chaos, which is why he held up both, Oliver Cromwell and Emperor Napoleon as exemplary men. Through the force of their will and personalities, they imposed order where there had been none (Lippincott 29). These were the heroes Carlyle documented in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*.

Carlyle's heroes arose to impose order on the "mob." And Carlyle's sense of order always carried a religious imperative. Carlyle was not interested in a mere logical rendering of order; he saw logic and reason as having failed to address the core of what it meant to be human. Virtually any religious imposition of the natural order of things suited Carlyle. One of his prophet heroes in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* was Mohammad. Odin was another. Reason, or pure reason, represented to Carlyle both a failure to understand and a failure to create an authentic or credible "authority," which is what his sense of "splendor," the realization of God in all things, was meant to rectify. Carlyle placed a lot of emphasis and faith in the curative value of belief. And this was one of the stumbling blocks to his philosophy. The moral distinction to be made between good beliefs and bad beliefs often seemed more a matter of who held which beliefs, which is where the hero came in. It was the hero who

decided. The overly simplistic sense of moral determinism found in Carlyle is easy to see in the unnumbered facing pages of Lindsay's *Collected Poems* (1927).

Lindsay always worked to expand his reputation for artistry out of poetry and into illustration. He really wanted to be seen as a visual artist who wrote poetry, and not the other way around. He always tried to inject his drawings into his books, but with little success. His editors almost without exception vetoed those endeavors. But he was able to place several of his pen and ink drawings in his *Collected Poems*. The drawings were pasted to the front and back covers and were meant to illustrate his poem "The Village Improvement Parade." The drawings were of a parade. On both the front and back covers there were members of the procession, who seem to be women, carrying banners which read: "Bad public taste is mob-law. Good public taste is Democracy." "Good" and "bad" seem undefined. The key word here is "mob," which could be read as a synonym for the lower classes. Carlyle originally saw the middle class as responsible for the reinstallation of order. And Lindsay always saw "democracy" as a middle class endeavor. From Carlyle, it was the prophet heroes who were to define these terms—good and bad—in the process of bringing unity to the society, but it was Carlyle and Lindsay who chose the representative heroes for their texts, those who were gifted in the art of making such choices. However, neither Carlyle nor Lindsay would have accepted the validity of this rendering; rather, they would have insisted that the choice and the fate of such heroes rested in the hands of God. Those people with the talent and the will to exercise and impose moral authority became the hand of God. Lindsay's *Art of the*

Moving Picture was a demonstration of how that imposition of moral authority could be brought about through the use of film.

Writing of the education of Jane Addams, the historian Robert Crunden noted, in his *Ministers of Reform* (1984), that "figures such as Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, and Dickens were far more important. . . and more significant sources of ideas than were religious works."[64] It was the same for Lindsay. When Lindsay wrote of democracy in *Art of the Moving Picture*, he did so from much the same perspective as Carlyle. Lindsay argued democracy was flawed; democracy was crass; democracy was limited and tainted. The whole point of *The Art of the Moving Picture* was to get past this necessary but intermediary democratic step on the road to the creation of community and order, reasserting middle class values and authority. Lindsay's solution to the problem Carlyle faced in his philosophy, how to find a hero with the credibility, will and ability to impose order, was to prepare the way, using the new mass media of film to inculcate the masses with the proper understanding, symbols, and spiritual sensitivities that would allow for the rise of a popular, moral, forceful, leader, like his hero Abraham Lincoln.

In a letter to Eleanor Dougherty, dated October 12, 1918, Lindsay left a telling account on his perspective of the working classes: "But I think the more probable chance for me [to die honorably for what I believe in] will come in some little row where strikers

[64] Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization 1889-1920* (Chicago; University of Illinois Press, 1985), 23.

are being shot down. In such a case, I do not think I would quibble. I would be with the fool strikers, right or wrong."[65] This quote could not be more Carlylian.

On the one hand Lindsay stated he would stand to the death with the strikers. On the other he dismissed those same strikers as damn "fools." Like Carlyle, Lindsay was paternalistic to the core. Lindsay and Carlyle believed in the right of all people to consideration from the state. And, Lindsay wrote a whole series of poems on the harmful effects of industrialization: "The Leaden-Eyed," "The Broncho That Would Not Be Broken," "The Eagle That Is Forgotten," "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan," "Factory Windows Are Always Broken," and "The Trap," among others. Both Carlyle and Lindsay wrote about the plight of the poor. Carlyle felt that the rise of industrialization, with its focus on individual tangible gain, as opposed to a focus on the good of the community, imposed poverty on those who had done no wrong, all for the sake of individual greed. Lindsay argued much the same:

> Finally, Francis Thompson, in the Hound of Heaven, has written a song that the young wizard [leader] may lean upon forevermore for private guidance. It is composed of equal parts of wonder and conscience. With this poem in his heart, the roar of the elevated railroad will be no more in his ears, and he will dream of palaces of righteousness, and lead other men

[65] Marc Chenetier, *Letters of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1979), 173. Eleanor Dougherty worked with Lindsay to put his poems to music (Cook xviii). Howard Willard Cook, *Our Poets of Today* (New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1918), xviii.

> to dream of them till the houses of mammon [wealth portrayed as a false god] fade away [sic] (*Art of the Moving Picture* 179).[66]

In reference to Carlyle, Benjamin Lippincott suggested that "No one pointed out with more force that a society dominated by Mammon is a society of oppression that invites disorder" (46). Carlyle saw the poor as being sacrificed, body and soul, to the profits of the new industrial order. He viewed England's willingness to sacrifice the poor as immoral, and Lindsay followed suit. But that didn't mean Carlyle, or Lindsay, thought the poor should have an independent *political* voice. Carlyle's concern reflected a sense of paternalism within a fairly static social hierarchy. He was concerned with reestablishing social order. To phrase this another way, Carlyle could suggest a sense of spiritual equality as a way of promoting social unity without relinquishing the sense of social hierarchy. And for all intents and purposes that was the position Lindsay himself took. His was a natural social order held together by the bonds of religious belief.

Lindsay's willingness to die for the working class was mostly rhetorical. He said the same thing concerning black people on the same page of his letter to Eleanor Dougherty. So far as I can tell, he never came close enough to a strike, a sit-in, lynching, or a demonstration for the possibility of harm to have ever been a consideration. The same could be said for his willingness to die for black people. These were nice sentiments, but they had little to do with his lived reality. On the other hand, his rhetoric consistently stood behind the belief that industrialization had caused the plight of the poor and that the poor were due consideration. In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay

[66] *The Hound of Heaven* is a twelve page religious poem, emphasizing the necessity of appreciating God's splendor. Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven* (Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1911).

consistently argued against the commercialization of America, but like Carlyle, he was very sketchy on what could take its place. Lindsay's major embellishment on the work of Carlyle was in suggesting *how* that change could take place, and the medium of change was to be the art of the moving picture.

Lindsay mentioned "democracy" and "strikers" on a dozen pages in *Art of the Moving Picture*. But Lindsay's sense of the word "democracy" didn't mean what it would mean to us today. For Lindsay it meant "people willingly doing what they should be doing anyway." Or to put it another way, people agreeing to abide by a white, Protestant, upper middle class perspective of their responsibilities. Lindsay had little patience for democratic institutions that actively involved the participation of the poor; he was more interested in directing the poor: "Sooner or later the kinetoscope will do what he [Walt Whitman] could not, bring the nobler side of the equality idea to the people who are so crassly equal" (58). "Often the democracy looks hopelessly shoddy" (164). "Our democratic dream has been a middle-class aspiration built on a bog of toil-soddened minds. . . . The Man with the Hoe had no spark in his brain" (172).[67] And here we see Lindsay addressing the need to direct the masses by way of art, the purpose he ascribed to *The Art of the Moving Picture*:

> The reporters for the newspapers should get their ideas and refreshment in such places as the Ryerson Art Library of the Chicago Art Institute. They

[67] "The Man with the Hoe" was a reference to the poem, book, and painting by the same name. It also stood as a metaphor for the worthy poor. The poem, by Edwin Markham, spoke to the community's collective social responsibility to create a good life for its members. The painting, "The Man with the Hoe," was by the French painter Jean Francois Millet. Millet was a predecessor and inspiration for the later work of Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet. Edwin Markham, *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (New York: Doubleday & McClure Co., 1900).

> should begin with such books as Richard Muther's History of Modern painting, John C. Van Dyke's Art for Art's Sake, Marquand and Frothingham's History of Sculpture, A. D. F. Hamlin's History of Architecture. They should take the business of guidance in this new world as a sacred trust, knowing they have the power to influence an enormous democracy [sic] (135).

Lindsay was in favor of a democracy, but Lindsay's democracy was to be run by and for the middle class, just as for Carlyle. But more so than for Carlyle, Lindsay's was a paternal middle class democracy. In his later work, Carlyle lost patience with the ability of the middle classes to bring the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to their "natural" conclusions, promoting a prophet hero to be head of state. In his Introduction to *The Carlyle Reader*, G. B. Tennyson wrote: "It was not so much in later years that Carlyle approved of the aristocracy as that he disapproved of democracy, which was in his view another way of saying mob rule."[68] Like Carlyle, Lindsay also saw the chaos inherent in the democratic mob, but Lindsay had more faith in the potential of that mob, on the one hand, and its potential to be guided on the other. Part of the reason Lindsay praised D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* throughout *Art of the Moving Picture* was because of the Ku Klux Klan's demonstrated potential to act as an organizational tool, setting the "proper" hierarchy in place once more. Lindsay's later *Golden Book of Springfield* seemed to seize on the image of the Ku Klux Klan as the ideal vehicle to bring order to a chaotic world.

---

[68] Thomas Carlyle. *A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Carlyle.* G. B. Tennyson, Ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), xxx.

We see this same sense of paternalism in Lindsay's use of the word "mob." He addressed the "mob" on seven pages of the text. "Mob" is a word that should not be taken too literally. In Lindsay's day the word was more apt to reflect the potential for violence or ignorance in the poor rather than an actual riot or mobbing. Lindsay wrote: "The Birth of a Nation is a Crowd Picture in a triple sense. On the films, as in the audience, it turns the crowd into a mob that is either for or against the Reverend Thomas Dixon's poisonous hatred of the negro [sic]" (47). Here Lindsay spoke to the ability of film to address and bind individuals to primal issues. Note that Lindsay was very careful to set the "poisonous hatred of the negro" in a separate category. Lindsay believed in order; he believed in racial order, but he also believed in community. Lindsay's sense of the value of the Ku Klux Klan was in the creation of an ordered community, yes, setting people in their place, but not dismissing them. Carlyle's perspective on Napoleon's distain for the mob is useful here. Carlyle wrote:

> Napoleon, in his first period, was a true Democrat. And yet by the nature of him, fostered too by his military trade, he knew that Democracy, if it were a true thing at all, could not be an anarchy: On that Twentieth of June (1792), Bourrienne and he sat in a coffee-house, as the mob rolled by: Napoleon expresses the deepest contempt for persons in authority that they do not restrain this rabble (Carlyle *On Heroes* 332).

Lindsay wrote: "In the future development of motion pictures mob-movements of anger and joy will go through fanatical and provincial whirlwinds into great national movements of anger and joy" (49). And here Lindsay spoke to the practical, political,

value of film in shaping the masses. The idea was to motivate the masses to act. But collectively, not individually. "The people are hungry for this fine and spiritual thing that Botticelli painted in the faces of his muses and heavenly creatures. Because the mob catch the very glimpse of it in Mary's face, they follow her night after night in the films" (Lindsay *Art* 36). Here we see that the ultimate goal was not the immediate political situation but the larger sense of generating a recognizable order based on a generalized sense of religion. Lindsay spoke to the sense of splendor or spirituality the mob would be able to participate in when exposed to art through film. That was Carlyle's sense of the prophet in the hero. The hero created a unifying and credible sense of meaning and purpose through the use of belief. Film by itself was not Lindsay's solution to Carlyle's dilemma. It was the *art* in the moving picture, the focus on "splendor" *in* film, that offered the potential to create community from chaos.

There was an interesting handshake going on between Thomas Carlyle and Vachel Lindsay that speaks to the continuity of their shared message, helping to explain the various themes in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, but also speaking to the revolutionary intent of Carlylian philosophy, and how Lindsay molded that philosophy to a new century, new opportunities and expectations. Carlyle spoke to the need to promote emigration through the creation of a state mandated emigration service.[69] Because of the effects of industrialization, because citizens in good standing were being forced from their homes through no fault of their own, because this also represented an

[69] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 307-09.

opportunity to teach the conquest of the western lands, and hence heroism in the creation of order, Carlyle promoted emigration. Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* described how those immigrants to America were to be integrated into the fabric of society. Where Carlyle argued England should promote emigration, Lindsay argued America should embrace the immigrant, finding a way to integrate the immigrant into American culture. And his solution to this problem of integrating the immigrant was film: "Immigrants are prodded by these swords of darkness and light [film] to guess at the meaning of the catch-phrases and headlines that punctuate the play. They strain to hear their neighbors whisper or spell them out" (*Art* 140). However, Lindsay also expanded on Carlyle, seeking to embrace virtually all European immigrants, not just the English. By definition, in Carlyle's texts, the emigrants were poor. They were being forced from England because of their poverty. It is no surprise then that Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* decried the effects of poverty and sought redress.

Lindsay spoke directly to the effects of industrialism, filth, depression, alcoholism and saloons in *Art of the Moving Picture*:

> The majority of miners and factory workers are on the wet side everywhere. The irritation caused by the gases in the mines, by the dirty work in the blackness, by the squalor in which the company houses are built, turns men to drink for reaction and lamplight and comradeship. The similar fevers and exasperation of factory life lead the workers to unstring their tense nerves with liquor (142).

So did Carlyle (*Past and Present* 307). What was less obvious was Lindsay's attempt to correct and alleviate the debilitating physical aspects of work and the cities that led to dissipation and depression. Because Lindsay phrased his arguments more abstractly, and because the analysts focused on his interest in aesthetics, his arguments for reworking living and working environments were often overlooked. Carlyle argued:

> . . . the legislature order all dingy Manufacturing Towns to cease from their soot and darkness; to let in the blessed sunlight, the blue of Heaven, and become clear and clean; . . . Baths, free air, a wholesome temperature, ceilings twenty feet high, might be ordained, by Act of Parliament, in all establishments licensed as Mills (Lippincott 44).

Lindsay's solution to the corruption of the environment was to promote "Architects as Crusaders," his title for chapter 18 of *Art of the Moving Picture*. Lindsay promoted the idea of hard work, a Carlylian theme, under the auspices of architects who would lay out the plans organizing,

> not only delineations of a future Cincinnati, Cleveland, or St. Louis, but whole counties and states and groups of states could be planned at one time, with the development of their natural fauna, flora, and forestry. Wherever nature has been rendered desolate by industry or mere haste, there let the architect and park-architect proclaim the plan (163).

The scale of this project to rework the environment would seem no less magnificent than Carlyle's.

The architects would become the "demi-gods" "to tear out the dirty core of [the] principal business square and erect a combination of civic centre and permanent and glorious bazaar" (163-64). Lindsay was arguing a correction to "the squalor in which the company houses are built" (142). And like many in his day, he encompassed this solution in the word "beauty," situating the power and artistry necessary to construct that beauty in the hands of the architects. This was Lindsay's perspective on the city beautiful campaign, and Lindsay's articulation of that campaign was probably less extravagant than that of the architects of the day.

Beauty was seen as a form of social control. Where once there was the possibility of directly supervising the poor, increasingly large urban populations and environments called for more sophisticated measures. The historian Paul Boyer, in *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America* (1978), wrote: "Model tenements, parks, pageants, and inspiring civic centers would exert their beneficent influence. . . with no direct contact between those responsible for them and those at whom they were aimed. They would operate. . . by remote control."[70] This recalls Lindsay's sense of film as a means to exert remote control over the urban masses. And it should come as no surprise that Lindsay was articulating his perspective of urban reform from Springfield, Illinois, a city in the backyard of Chicago, in 1915. Daniel Burnham finished his *Plan of Chicago* in 1909. In describing his proposed City Hall, "his monument to the spirit of civic unity," Burnham wrote that: "Rising from the plain upon which Chicago rests, its [the City Hall's] effect may be compared to that of the dome of St. Peter's at Rome" (273). Lindsay wrote in

[70] Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 278.

these same terms, tying beauty, religion, order, and social control together as a way of addressing the needs of the changing environment. At the end of his chapter on "Architects as Crusaders" Lindsay wrote:

> Beautiful architectural undertakings, while appearing to be material, and succeeding by the laws of American enterprise, bring with them the healing hand of beauty. Beauty is not directly pious, but does more civilizing in its proper hour than many sermons or laws (*Art* 165).

Lindsay's words were often seen as extravagant, and silly, but Burnham's. . . . As the architect who designed New York's Flatiron building and Washington's Union Station; as the Director of Works for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893), and a famous urban planner, Daniel Burnham could say virtually the same things and be seen as visionary. Paul Boyer noted that Edward Bennett, Burnham's assistant, wrote in his diary: "We talked of the plan [of Chicago], but more of the philosophy of life—and his belief in the infinite possibilities of material expression of the spiritual" (275). Lindsay's "Village Improvement Parade," both the poem and the drawings pasted to the front and back covers of his *Collected Poems*, celebrated the idea that "Green Parks Are Better Than Gold," "Ugliness Is A Kind Of Misgovernment," "Fair Streets Are Better Than Silver." There were many differences between Lindsay and Daniel Burnham. Lindsay's products were to be measured in words and not stone. Lindsay spoke and wrote to a more popular audience. Though the intended audience has little to do with the content or meaning of words or stone, it has a lot to do with both disciplinary perspective and the amount of respect it garnered.

When Lindsay wrote of improving the lived experience of the workers, improving their environment, he almost always also presented this as a cure for the saloon. In his chapter entitled "The Substitute for the Saloon," Lindsay denounced the bartender as a political manipulator backing local machine politics; he tied immigrants to life in the cities, slums, and the use of alcohol, specifically mentioning the Irish within this context, which was unusual. In his *Art of the Moving Picture*, as opposed to *The Golden Book of Springfield*, Lindsay limited references to specific nationalities among the immigrants. In "Substitute for the Saloon" Lindsay argued for temperance and the Anti-Saloon League, suggesting that "farmers and church-people" were apt to "drive the saloon out of legal existence." Lindsay purposively "announced" himself "a farmer and puritan," though that was a more rhetorical than factual portrayal (*Art* 143). And the means Lindsay promoted to create a "dry" America was: "More moving picture theatres in doubtful territory will help make dry voters" (144). There was virtually nothing here that one would not find in the philosophy of Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle wrote that there would never be a "permanent beneficent arrangement of affairs" without the cement of religion.[71] In like vein Lindsay wrote: "The strong men of the community are church elders, not through fanaticism, but by right of leadership" (*Art* 141).

Carlyle saw proper emigrants as hard working people transforming the land in productive ways, and though Carlyle was not as adamantly opposed to drink as Lindsay, he was also not sympathetic to the indulgence (Vanden Bossche 114). Carlyle was born and raised a Puritan, and though Carlyle did not adamantly oppose drink, he would have

[71] Thomas Carlyle, *Two Note Books of Thomas Carlyle: From 23d March 1822 to 16th May 1832*. Charles Eliot Norton, Ed. (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 179.

opposed the saloon if that had been an issue in his time. Carlyle insisted on order and as he grew older there was "a transition from compelling belief to compelling obedience." Carlyle's model leaders sought to organize labor "in order to subdue the 'bewildering mob' into 'a firm regimented mass'" (115). And, had it been an issue, part of the problem would have been to remove both the bartender and the saloon as a (dis) organizing force. The idea was to compel obedience to belief and the force of order was the middle class. The use of both force and belief were the tools of choice for Carlyle's preeminent hero: Oliver Cromwell (119).

Lindsay's emphasis on the cities, slums, immigrants, saloons and drink points the reader to the primary source of disorder that film was meant to redress. Lindsay was concerned with the behavior of the new immigrants, and the new immigrants, largely, were not of the same belief as the puritan fathers. The impetus to Lindsay's text was the creation of order, and if one was to use Carlyle and Cromwell as models, then one was free to use any means to compel both belief and order. In the text, Lindsay specifically mentioned American Indians, Jews, and the Scotch, once each, the Irish, Russians, and Anglo-Saxons twice, the French seven times, the Italians sixteen, and black, blacks, negro, negress, and slave—where "slave" was clearly indicative of black—twenty times. The word "race" itself was also used eighteen times, and though sometimes ambiguous, ten of those occasions clearly designated "race" as representative of a physical, social or cultural unit. If there were to be a point of racial or religious emphasis in the text it would rest somewhere between the Italians, who were largely Catholic, and black

Americans, but there was also always an implied comparison with the Anglo-Saxons as an ideal.

Lindsay's statement identifying himself as puritanical notwithstanding, like Carlyle, Lindsay really had no strong preference for *a* particular religious belief. In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay wrote of the "new pantheism" and Springfield's "civic religion" (52, 102-03). Throughout his life Lindsay claimed various religious denominations, but the idea for both Lindsay and Carlyle was belief itself. Religious belief was to be used as an organizing tool in creating credibility in support of a leader, credibility in support of community. Like Carlyle, Lindsay was not adverse to the creation of synthetic religions, and in *Art of the Moving Picture* Lindsay suggested support or tolerance for Judaism, Norse religion (Thor, Loki, Freya), Egyptian religion (Osiris, Horus, Ani, Anubis), socialism ("socialist churches"), and ("Modernist") Catholicism (123, 168-69, 177, 181, 184). Within reason, Lindsay would probably have lived happily within most any denomination, but the tipping point governing the idea of what constituted religious reasonableness was not only the test of order but also what Lindsay considered to be essentially "American." And Lindsay defined the slum, the saloon, miscegenation, and drunkenness as opposed to both order and spiritual belief, opposed to the splendor to be found in all endeavor, opposed to that spirituality Daniel Burnham found could be made manifest in "material expression" (Boyer 275).

The core chapter in *The Art of the Moving Picture* is Chapter XIII, "Hieroglyphics." You can't understand *The Art of the Moving Picture* until you've

understood Chapter XIII, and you can't understand Chapter XIII without a Rosetta stone, which Lindsay was careful to conceal or omit. I doubt Lindsay wanted the origins of Chapter XIII understood. He hid the information necessary to interpret that message. And he did this with virtually everything he wrote. He wanted to be seen as a talented and creative intellectual, even though he failed to graduate from both Hiram College and two art schools. Maybe *because* he failed to graduate, he wanted to be seen as a talented and creative intellectual. Repeatedly, throughout his life, he asked Hiram College to grant him an honorary degree, which they pointedly refused to consider. He went to his grave with that request still pending.

Lindsay was proud of his creativity, and he didn't want that image besmirched. So he said and wrote things as if *he* had said them first. He was very careful to hide the origins of his ideas. In our discussions of his work, we will see that he repeatedly hid his source material. Lindsay didn't seem to distort or manufacture evidence. He "allowed" the reader to believe what he wanted you to believe by refusing to fill in the narrative gaps.

Edgar Lee Masters, in his biography of Vachel Lindsay, wrote of Lindsay's four years in New York's Ashcan School of Art:

> He spent his hours out of school visiting exhibits of pictures, art galleries, and walking the rich corridors of the metropolitan Museum. He explored the quaint and curious neighborhoods of the city, which had not yielded at

> the time to the innovation of the modern apartment building and the skyscraper. . . .[72]

Masters's statement was deceptive. The account sounds as if Lindsay had done his schoolwork and then spent his leisure time exploring New York City. "Quaint and curious" does not lead one to suspect Lindsay was perusing the slums and ghettoes of New York as a part of his curriculum. Probably without knowing, Masters described the quality of being a mobile observer that the Ashcan School of Art encouraged. The Ashcan School focused on the study of how the other half lived. This was a part of Lindsay's course of study. Searching out poignant opportunities to sketch *was* his assignment, his homework, for any given day.

Rebecca Zurier, in *Picturing the City*, quotes Stuart Davis's account of "the energetic form of urban exploration" that the Ashcan School promoted:

> Enthusiasm for running around and drawing things in the raw ran high. In pursuance of this compulsion [we] toured extensively in the metropolitan environs. Chinatown; the Bowery; the burlesque shows; the Brooklyn Bridge; McSorley's Saloon on East 7th Street; the Music Halls of Hoboken; the Negro Saloons; riding on the canal boats under the Public Market (123).

Masters clearly did not understand this. I doubt Lindsay explained to friends or family that the money his parents contributed towards his education was spent on artistic explorations of New York City slums and ghettoes. The idea behind this urban

[72] Edgar Lee Masters, *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 122.

exploration was to create art—sketches, pictures, and paintings—that the everyday person could understand, an art for the people. And that translated very well into Lindsay's accounts of the life of the urban masses and their interest in saloons that appear in *The Art of the Moving Picture*.

The methodology of the Ashcan School also provides the necessary clue as to the origins of Lindsay's major works. Lindsay made allusion to his signature philosophy of literature, the Higher Vaudeville, in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, though the allusion was so cryptic as to elude both notice and commentary. Lindsay addressed the "higher photoplays" as the purview of "painters, sculptors, and architects" as opposed to the "managers of vaudeville circuits" (*Art* 95). There were two ideas at play here. The first was that film should rightly be the responsibility of artists instead of pedestrian bourgeois businessmen, a theme that both pervades the text and mirrors Carlyle's abhorrence of Mammon. This was also a primary tenet of the Ashcan School. Robert Henri wrote: "I am not interested in art as a means of making a living, but I am interested in art as a means of living a life" (Zurier 119). The second was that the very lack of artistry inherent in popular culture could be seized and used as a base upon which to build the "higher photoplays" (Lindsay *Art* 95). This was Lindsay's core principle, his methodology. If you take the statement, "the Higher Vaudeville" or "the higher photoplay," literally rather than figuratively then it leads you to the origins of "The Congo," "The Golden Faced People," and *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Without this understanding I would never have been able to correctly interpret "The Golden Faced People," "The Congo," *The Golden Book of Springfield*, or even *The Art of the Moving*

Picture. Lindsay seized on works of popular culture, works from vaudeville, with the intent to upgrade them to the status of art.

How do you create an art for the people? You have to speak the idiom of the day, the idiom of your audience. That was what Lindsay drew from vaudeville, and that was what he sought in visual art. "[T]he audience of a movie or the observer in a city—must decipher visual clues" (Zurier 28). Visual art required a sign language. That was what Lindsay was doing roaming the ghettoes and slums. He was learning the visual symbolism that spoke to and of the residents, their hats, clothes, gaits, racial traits, and which cues belonged to who. Visual symbolism was just another way of saying "hieroglyphics." In *The Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay did not tell us that the need to discover the sign or symbol with which to communicate race and class was one of the core messages taught by Robert Henri, the senior member of the Ashcan School of Art. He mentioned "Henri" once in the entire text, and that only in passing (78). One has to look at the methods of the Ashcan School itself in order to discover the incidence, practice, and intent of racial profiling. The Ashcan School emphasized social criticism, observation, and reporting, and that led them to render individuals as representative of groups, critically examining those individuals with an eye to the heroic, ironic, poignant, typical and expected act or experience.

In *The Art Spirit* (1923), by Robert Henri, virtually any page you open the book to will address the need to interpret the social signs as to their meaning. "The lace on the lady's sleeve is no longer lace, it is a part of her, and in the picture stands as a symbol of

her refinement and her delicacy."[73] "Plainly you [the artist] are to develop as a seer, as an appreciator as well as a craftsman" (26).

> What were the signs in that landscape, in the air, in the motion, in our companionship, that so excited our imagination and made us so happy?
>
> If we only knew what were those signs we could paint that country. . . .
>
> That time we sat in the evening silence in the face of the mesa and heard the sudden howl of a pack of coyotes, and had a thrill and a dread which was not fear of the pack, for we knew they were harmless. Just what was that dread—what did it relate to? Something 'way back in the race perhaps? We have strange ways of seeing (33).

Note the reference to "race." Henri assumed race. So did Lindsay, and Lindsay wrote within much the same context, concerning race, using different examples:

> If you go to a motion picture and feel yourself suddenly gripped by the highest dramatic tension, as on the old stage, and reflect afterward that it was a fight between only two or three men in a room otherwise empty, stop to analyze what they stood for. They were probably representatives of groups or races that had been pursuing each other earlier in the film. Otherwise the conflict, however, violent, appealed mainly to the sense of speed (*Art* 47).

Lindsay the artist assigned value to variable signs, just as Robert Henri taught: "The study of art is the study of the relative value of things. The factors of a work of art

[73] Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), 20.

cannot be used constructively until their relative values are known" (Henri *The Art Spirit* 27). Lindsay was interpreting for us what the constructive value of conflict meant—within the frame of his era, within the frame of his intent.

In *Picturing the City* (2006), Rebecca Zurier drew much that same meaning from Robert Henri's work. She quoted Henri as saying: "[the artist] puts in his work, whether consciously or not, a record of sensibilities, and his work bridges time and space, bringing us together" (115). And she noted that accounts of Henri's life as a young man supported his antipathy for blacks (109-10). Zurier writes that Henri exploited the model Irish stereotype:

> Henri's portrait *Himself* (1913) presents its subject as an example of an Irish type whose jolly face, red whiskers, and collarless shirt were part of the standard uniform used by "Irish" comedians on stage. . . . Henri's claim, 'always I find the race expressed in the individual,' recalls the vaudevillian's persona: one figure embodies the characteristics of a group (234-35).

In trying to communicate the complexity of the urban environment, the artists of the Ashcan School resorted to what today might be called caricatures, depicting "apelike" and "cherry nosed" Irishmen, "hook-nosed Jews," and "thick-lipped blacks" (Zurier 221). The intent was not to depict individuality but the totality and mass nature of the urban scene. Edgar Lee Masters did not understand this, nor did virtually any critic of "The Congo." The accumulated misunderstandings, no doubt encouraged by Lindsay's reticence, perpetuated themselves across time and achieved a life of their own.

Robert Henri and the Ashcan School were looking for symbols and signs with which to communicate the reality of life in the slums: "Slum subjects were preferable to the more smiling aspects of life, for somehow life seemed to flow richer and freer in Bowery bars and flop houses" (Zurier 123). But these symbols, signs, and landmarks were not static; they represented movement through time and space. Henri saw artistry as depicting "the progress of the human spirit" (117). It should come as no surprise here that Henri had studied John Ruskin, and as we noted Ruskin saw himself paired with Carlyle. Carlyle used "the symbols and signs of the times" to explain what history meant (Vanden Bossche 108). Carlyle wrote: "There is no biography of a man, much less any history or biography of a nation, but wraps in it a message out of heaven" (Lippincott 30). Carlyle addressed the religious or spiritual meaning of events, and as Christ suggested in Matthew 13:13 that only those who understood the signs and metaphors could ever hope to reach the kingdom of heaven. Lindsay did virtually the same thing. He picked out the signs of his time and interpreted them from a religious or spiritual perspective to show the trajectory of society, to show what changes needed to be made and which decisions had been correct. That was what the Ashcan School had taught him to do.

Lindsay was a long standing member of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and, in part, he supported himself by teaching art classes for the YMCA while enrolled in the Ashcan School of Art in New York.[74] His association with the YMCA and his mother's religious work would have acquainted him with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), where temperance was a well developed and long standing

[74] Eleanor Ruggles, *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959), 105.

initiative. Citing that organization's minutes, historian Alison Parker, in "Hearts Uplifted and Minds Refreshed" (1999), demonstrated the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's interest in the use of art and film from 1893 to 1928.[75] In the *Union Signal*, the WCTU's official publication, Margaret Platt wrote an article entitled "Substitutes for the Saloon" (1915), where she noted: "The moving picture may aid as a substitute for the saloon by providing chaste productions which are both interesting and educational."[76] In a chapter also entitled "The Substitute for the Saloon," Lindsay wrote much the same thing (*Art of the Moving Picture* 140). Lindsay *was* the first to write a book length critique of film. But he was not the first to see the possibilities of film as a vehicle for moral uplift, offering competition to the saloon—though he might appear that way if one were unfamiliar with religious and temperance literature at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The WCTU aspired to racial equality and tried to turn a blind eye to the issues of race and immigrants, but that ideal was seldom realized. Certainly the activist for racial equality, Ida B. Wells, never saw the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as anything other than racially biased. In her autobiography, *Crusader for Justice* (1970), Ms. Wells addressed her relationship with the president of the WCTU, Frances Willard, in confrontational terms:

> This woman [Frances Willard] had won the admiration and respect of the people by her courageous fight against intemperance and the narration of

[75] Alison M. Parker, "'Hearts Uplifted and Minds Refreshed': The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Production of Pure Culture in the United States, 1880-1930," *Journal of Women's History* 11.2 (1999), 135-58.
[76] Margaret B. Platt, "Substitutes for the Saloon," *Union Signal* (15 July 1915), 4.

> the successes which had attended her efforts in the United States. But when it was asserted that in no WCTU in the South had a colored woman been admitted as a member, and still Miss Willard acknowledged that she had blamed illiterate Negroes for the defeat of Prohibition in the South, it was a staggering revelation.[77]

The historian Kenneth Rose, in *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition* (1997), suggested that in the aftermath of prohibition, "the WCTU continued to see immigrants as a threatening, destabilizing element."[78] It was clear within the context of Rose's statement that the new "immigrants" were seen as having come from different racial stock. Because race was such a divisive issue and because it permeated everything, it seems unlikely Lindsay would have failed to see the struggle over race and immigration within the ranks of the WCTU. The same focus on sign and symbol found within the Ashcan School and Carlyle (among other influences) would have driven Lindsay to focus on race as *the* issue and measure of his time.

As might be expected, Carlyle, writing primarily of the English condition, had little sympathy for idiosyncrasies of race or culture. Order was Carlyle's measure and goal, and that meant conforming the masses. By twenty first century standards, Carlyle could be seen as intolerant. Racial profiling was a part of his methodology. In writing of blacks, Carlyle noted: "[They] have to be servants to those that are born wiser than [they]" (Vanden Bossche 136). And he saw little to distinguish the Irish from the blacks:

---

[77] Ida B. Wells, *Crusader for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*. Alfreda M. Duster, Ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970), 209-10. The interaction Ms. Wells refers to took place in 1894.
[78] Kenneth D. Rose, *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 64.

"Carlyle's prejudice against Celts enabled him to substitute the West Indian blacks of 'The Negro/Nigger Question' [an article defining Carlyle's position on race] for the Irish of the projected book on the Irish Question" (137). Carlyle described the Irish as "immethodic, headlong, violent, mendacious. . ." "drunkards" and suggested that if the Irish continued to violate English law then the government would "flog" and "shoot" them, and if that did not suffice then Cromwell's ultimatum to the Irish at Drogheda would be put to effect. At Drogheda, Cromwell had said: "Refuse to obey, I will not let you continue living" (133, 137-38).

Not only did Carlyle depict the Irish as "drunkards," but he compared them with West Indian blacks. And what we have is a sign or symbol identifying those who stood outside of the given order, those who supported the saloon, if only passively. In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay depicted the slums as overrun by saloons. Much as parks, green grass, pink-lemonade and film stood for positive environmental conditions, Lindsay depicted saloons as a negative aspect of the environment, one influencing the working poor inhabitants of the slums (52).

Richard Stivers, in *Hair of the Dog* (1976), wrote of the community-building aspects of the hard drinking Irish.[79] Strivers noted the practical limitations that potato famines and over population imposed on the Irish, limiting their ability to marry and raise families, forcing them to emigrate. Strivers argued that the creation of male drinking communities was one way the Irish demonstrated their adherence to the strict rule of celibacy within Irish Catholicism. Within this frame: "The male nondrinker, in rejecting

[79] Richard Stivers, *Hair of the Dog: Irish Drinking and its American Stereotype* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

the auspices of the bachelor group, has jeopardized community traditions by remaining outside its control in that the bachelor group is a primary basis of social order" (97). Lindsay would not have understood the logic of the drinking community Stivers depicted, nor would he have given it any credence. Neither would Carlyle. The issue here would have been one of order. Simply by drinking, simply by standing outside of Lindsay's perspective of American social expectations, the Irish who populated saloons demonstrated their lack of conformity, *and* the willingness to challenge the given order. Film for Lindsay was the means to compel obedience without the need to liquidate that offender.

Lindsay saw film as a painless form of indoctrination for the masses. He saw culture as synthetic. The basis of Lindsay's social movement theory was to flip the top off the masses, pouring culture in, using this new weapon of film as a painless trepanation procedure. This trepanning technique would have been one of the few ways to enculturate the masses in an era where the average person worked ten to sixteen hours a day.

Art of the Moving Picture was more a demonstration text than an argument. There are only a series of more or less closely related topics and themes developed in the text, so much so that the text could be seen as a three dimensional artifact that one would peruse from different angles in different light in order to get a sense of the whole. Just as in Carlyle's texts, Lindsay's was neither strictly logical nor was it meant to be. Like Carlyle's, this text was meant to address a higher order of spirituality. In that sense the

text was much more like a jeremiad, a prophetic pronouncement, where the prophet reads the signs for the benefit of the congregation.

One derives a sense of the main idea from the texts or films that Lindsay held up as models. *Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Judith of Bethulia* (1914), *Enoch Arden* (1915), and *The Italian* (1915) were model films Lindsay promoted more often and in more depth than others. One could add *The Avenging Conscience* (1914) here. This was one of Lindsay's favorites, but it was so similar to *Enoch Arden* that I see no reason to develop a separate discussion of the film. All of these films could be considered as a demonstration of Carlyle's philosophy, *Judith of Bethulia* and *Birth of a Nation* representing more complete statements than the others. *Judith of Bethulia* and *Birth of a Nation* were nation building films. That was the core of Carlyle's philosophy, and that was what Lindsay was about. Susan Courtney, in *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation* (2003), ends her discussion of *Birth of a Nation* arguing that "the film thoroughly weds and finally insists upon its preferred visual regimes of racial, sexual, and now explicitly national identity."[80] That Lindsay would use *Birth of a Nation* as a model film is significant. That he would implicitly disagree with the tactics employed in that film pursuant to the achievement of national unity is even more significant. It was clear Lindsay agreed with the goal of unity and order, but a close reading of *Art of the Moving Picture* also shows that he disagreed with the means that film promoted to achieve order. But it takes a close reading to discover this.

[80] Susan Courtney, *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race, 1903-1967* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 99.

When we addressed "The Man with the Hoe," had we not examined the reference as a quadruple entendre, a reference to the poem, book, the Millet painting, while also serving as a metaphor for class and occupation, I doubt any but those with an art history background would have understood the context. "The Man with the Hoe" was not one of Millet's more famous paintings. And that was just one example of Lindsay's iconic style. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of these statements in the text. We have seen that Lindsay referred to Robert Henri and Thomas Carlyle once, each, in *Art of the Moving Picture,* and we have also addressed the influence both Henri and Carlyle had on Lindsay's education, perspective, and philosophy. Lindsay never explained any of this. When Lindsay mentioned William Shakespeare's *Othello*, or *Antony and Cleopatra*, he expected the audience to understand what the play was about, and if the reader did not understand that those plays also addressed the topics of race and miscegenation, then they missed a large part of his message (*Art* 44, 52). Lindsay's argumentative style was cumulative and layered.

Lindsay used capitalization eclectically, as did many in his day. That makes it very difficult to determine whether he was addressing a play, book, poem, painting, metaphor, sculpture, or unique event. In part, the text represented Lindsay's attempt to demonstrate his artistic and literary credibility. But his technique was to list, book after book, title after title, author after author, character after character, poet after poet, references from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, from England, Germany, France, America, and Japan, in dizzying array. Lindsay wrote of Christopher Wren, Alfred Tennyson, Lon Chaney, Benjamin Franklin, Johann Gutenberg,

Emmanuel Swedenborg, Pieter Breughel, Anita Loos, John Ruskin, Jules Verne, and the Wright brothers, just to name a few, virtually never explaining in any depth who these people were or what he was referring to [sic]. There was a logic to the lists. Much like Carlyle in *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, Lindsay was identifying exemplary models of behavior, heroes to be emulated. But one had to "understand," before the fact, in order to interpret the text.

Considering the complexity of the text, Kauffman's and Master's mis-understanding of what Lindsay was about was understandable. Explicating the references in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, one by one, might take several volumes, even just focusing on the literal and ignoring the implied statements. Though most interpretations present it that way, *The Art of the Moving Picture* was not a simple text, nor was it for the uninitiated. It was complex; it was confusing, and often contradictory. But apparent contradictions would not have daunted Lindsay. When looking at a three dimensional image, what might look red from one angle could look black from another. And Lindsay would have seen his text in just that way.

If *I* were to pick *a* representative thesis from Lindsay's text it would be the statement Lindsay made concerning a filmed fight between "two or three men:" "They were probably representatives of groups or races that had been pursuing each other earlier in the film." Here we see Lindsay assumed race as primary motivation. In the same section, Lindsay described Ben Cameron, from Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, as a representative symbol of all white men: "The white leader, Col. Ben Cameron (impersonated by Henry B. Walthall), enters not as an individual, but as representing the

whole Anglo-Saxon Niagara" (*Art* 47). In his analysis of the film *The Italian*, Lindsay suggested that "the immigrant hero of this film. . . represent[ed] not merely his own individual problems, but those of the "whole Italian race coming to America" (Wolfe 115). This is the same iconic technique Lindsay learned from his days in the Ashcan School: find the representative symbol to paint. The interdisciplinary scholar, Myron Lounsbury, wrote of Lindsay's desire to address and reconcile the issues that had polarized America.[81] I think that is a good summary of Lindsay's demonstrated rhetorical purpose throughout his major texts. But it also offers a wonderful example of both Lindsay's iconic emphasis and his ability to turn a symbol.

Poverty, immigrants and race were the primary issues that echoed throughout the pages of *Art of the Moving Picture*, but Lindsay's idea of race lay mostly within the context of the European races and the equality of race within that category. This is a perspective that Vanessa Dickerson, in *Dark Victorians* (2008), attributed to Carlyle, a white first philosophy, even when that meant providing for the supposedly degraded Irish and Gaelic populations.[82] Lindsay's choice of exemplary films most often focused on those that emphasized racial and class distinctions, but one seldom finds blacks represented within those films. Finding ways to include the white immigrants from other cultures into the fabric of American life was one of the goals of Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture*, but it was also one of the ways *Art of the Moving Picture* paralleled Carlylian philosophy.

---

[81] Myron Lounsbury, Ed. *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies: A Second Book of Film Criticism by Vachel Lindsay* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1995), 13.
[82] Vanessa D. Dickerson, *Dark Victorians* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 83-84.

One can look at Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* reference to "George Rawlinson" as a working example of Lindsay's iconic statements. I doubt anyone reading this dissertation would know of George Rawlinson. Though telling the reader Rawlinson wrote a book, Lindsay never bothered providing the title of that book. "There happens to be here on the table a book on Egypt by Rawlinson that I used to thumb long ago" was the way Lindsay introduced the topic (*Art* 116). Researching the matter independently reveals George Rawlinson to have been the respected historian and author of the *History of Ancient Egypt* (1881). Lindsay's reference to Rawlinson represented the kinds of cryptic statements repeatedly injected into *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Lindsay expected his audience to know, understand, research and/or intuit the intent of these statements.

Looking into Rawlinson's *Ancient Egypt* reveals a text pregnant with signs and implications for America. In *Ancient Egypt* Lindsay found a model for how civilization had split into black and white, North and South, and he made repeated reference to this text and the theme of Egyptian lore in his other published works. Lindsay seized upon the racial division of Egyptian civilization as an explanation for the division of humanity into multiple races and used the Egyptian model as a basis for avoiding past mistakes, recombining those who had left the racial union of humanity for their own splinter groups. The text itself could be read as a metaphor for America in the aftermath of the Civil War, a theme not far removed from Carlyle's history of *The French Revolution*, the idea of a popular revolution as a necessary step in the creation and support of a

conservative state. And of course it would be easy to see how Abraham Lincoln would fit as the benign dictator of that state, working to preserve Union and order. Rawlinson's text could also be seen as an historical precedent or parallel for D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, an artistic recreation of the past. Via film Lindsay meant to redirect the course of American society from a consumer capitalist orientation to a theocracy, and *Ancient Egypt* was one of the cryptic keys he left to show how that theocracy could be brought into being.

If you think of history, as did Carlyle, as a series of signs waiting to be interpreted, then Lindsay's intent in introducing Rawlinson's text becomes more clear. Lindsay introduced Rawlinson on the first page of "Chapter XIII: Hieroglyphics." So, Rawlinson's text itself was a demonstration of a sign or hieroglyphic statement.

Understanding who Rawlinson was and what he wrote helps explain Lindsay's fascination with the Egyptian hieroglyphics most of Chapter XIII was devoted to. Lindsay wrote: "Man is an Egyptian first, before he is any other type of civilized being. The Nile flows through his heart" (*Art* 167). "Man is an Egyptian first" was a poetically correct summation of the first three chapters of George Rawlinson's *History of Ancient Egypt* (1881). Rawlinson argued Egypt as the cradle of civilization, and that civilization itself derivative of a unified concept of "race." Rawlinson specifically portrayed ancient Egypt as that point in civilization where the white and black races separated and went their own ways.

Ancient Egypt (1881) was just one of George Rawlinson's studies. He also wrote *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World* (1862-67); *The Sixth Great*

Oriental Monarchy (1873); *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy* (1875); *Manual of Ancient History* (1869); *Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament* (1871); *The Origin of Nations* (1877); *Egypt and Babylon* (1885); *History of Phoenicia* (1889); *Parthia* (1893); and *Memoir of Major-General Sir HC Rawlinson* (1898), among others. Lindsay made repeated reference to *Ancient Egypt* throughout his life.[83] And he provided an interpretation of Rawlinson's text in the preface of his *Collected Poems* (1927), which allows for an easier interpretation of its significance:

> I consider all my cartooning [Lindsay's sketches] in some sense hieroglyphic in the old Egyptian way. The principal towns of Southern Illinois are Cairo, Karnak and Thebes, and the swamp-bordered river moves southward past Memphis, Tennessee, named for the town of King Menes, first King of Egypt. There is a parallel between the psychology and history of the Mississippi delta and the famous delta of the old Nile. Africans roll cotton bales on steamships on wharves of both rivers. . . . No one can read it [Rawlinson's text] without getting the notion that some fate is swinging us around to the moods of Egypt (xxiv).[84]

Here it is easy to see Lindsay's focus on signs and metaphors in the service of "fate." And it is easy to see that he saw the Nile as a metaphor for the Mississippi.

---

[83] In his *Collected Poems* (1927), Lindsay elaborated on Rawlinson's text, telling us the book was one of the earliest gifts he received from his father (11).

[84] The quote continues: "They sing the same tunes, ten thousand years old. Once I sang the Congo. Long before that I sang the Nile. The forty pictures in this book, most of them dated before 1912, are in their own way, a part of the Egypt that is in me forever. And I beg all my readers to look into Swedenborg's theory of Egyptian Hieroglyphics" (*Collected Poems* xxiv).

In his second chapter, Rawlinson referred to the rise of Egyptian civilization as the turning point of mankind. Lindsay wrote much the same thing several times in different ways in *Art of the Moving Picture*: "From nineteen hundred and five on I did orate my opinions to a group of advanced students. We assembled weekly for several winters in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, for the discussion of the masterpieces of historic order, from Egypt to America" (31). Then there was Lindsay's "Man is an Egyptian first. . . ." However, Rawlinson not only wrote of the rise of civilization but also of how distinctive races, white and black, arose. Rawlinson noted:

> The fundamental character of the Egyptian in respect of physical type, language, and tone of thought, is Nigritic. The Egyptians were not negroes, but they bore a resemblance to the negro which is indisputable. Their type differs from the Caucasian in exactly those respects which when exaggerated produce the negro. They were darker, had thicker lips, lower foreheads, larger heads, more advancing jaws, a flatter foot, and a more attenuated frame. It is quite conceivable that the negro type was produced by a gradual degeneration from that which we find in Egypt. It is even conceivable that the Egyptian type was produced by gradual advance and amelioration from that of the negro.[85]

Rawlinson's assumption was racial hierarchy, and his Chapter One depicted the Nile as the river that divided and joined two separate nations, nations distinguished by race. For young man Lindsay, born in the year after Reconstruction's demise, *Ancient Egypt* was a

[85] George Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*. Tenth Edition. (London: Fisher Unwin, 1886), 25.

tale of two peoples, North and South, Caucasian white and Nigritic.[86] Lindsay read Egypt as a metaphor for the division of America in the Civil War. And the book held special significance as a gift from his father (Lindsay, *Collected*, 11).

The 1890 *New York Times*' review of George Rawlinson's *The Traders of Antiquity: A History of Phoenicia* (1889) depicted the author as a "compiler" rather than a visionary. But for that reason the *Times* recommended his works as representative of the ideas of his day.[87] With Lindsay's Carlylian perspective on history as a demonstration of signs, and coming as a gift from his father, I think it fair to see Rawlinson's text, from Lindsay's perspective, as a demonstration of race as the natural order of things. Carlyle saw religion and literature, not the economy, as necessary for the creation of a stable, self-perpetuating society (Vanden Bossche 170). Concerning the possibility of a social revolution, Lindsay wrote virtually the same thing: "We are not proposing an economic revolution, or that human nature be suddenly altered" (*Art* 164). Michael Omi and Howard Winant, in *Racial Formation in the United States* (1994), quote from Michael Reich's *Racial Inequality* (1981), to address the perspective of capitalism on race: "Capitalists benefit from racial divisions whether or not they have individually or collectively practiced racial discrimination."[88] This would certainly reflect Lindsay's privileged position in the society, and at least partially explain why Lindsay intended his

[86] There is no way of knowing which of the many possible editions of *Ancient Egypt* Lindsay drew from. The Tenth Edition (1886) is used here because it was a more professionally edited text than the First Edition. The quality of prose in the Tenth Edition is noticeably better. Insofar as Lindsay wrote that Rawlinson's text was a gift from his father, and insofar as Lindsay was born in November 1878, it would seem unlikely that an earlier edition would have been gifted the child. Lindsay would have been eight in 1886.

[87] "New Publications." *The New York Times* (27 January 1890): 2

[88] Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United Sates: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 1994), 31.

revolution to be one of beauty, transcendence and belief, rather than an "economic revolution" that might turn "human nature" on its head.

Rawlinson addressed the amalgamation of races in "Chapter Two" of his text. He saw civilization as a crossroads separating the human race as a whole. For Rawlinson Egyptian civilization marked that point where the black race began to degenerate as they moved into Africa, while the white race began to evolve into a more civilized and European people.

> Still, whencesoever derived, the Egyptian people, as it existed in the flourishing times of Egyptian history, was beyond all question a mixed race, showing diverse affinities. Whatever the people was originally, it received into it from time to time various foreign elements, and those in such quantities as seriously to affect its physique—Ethiopians from the south, Libyans from the west, Semites from the north-east, where Africa adjoined on Asia. There are two quite different types of Egyptian form and feature, blending together in the mass of the nation, but strongly developed, and (so to speak) accentuated in individuals (25).

Rawlinson's emphasis on the idea of a mixed race paralleled Lindsay's effort to incorporate the immigrants into the fabric of American life. The factual certainty of immigrants and emigration bespoke a parallel between ancient Egypt and America on the cusp of the millennium. Rawlinson also spoke to the differentiation of races and individuals, his sense of inborn traits and the obvious superiority of some races over others. It is clear from Rawlinson's text that he believed in the inheritability of ideas,

abilities, traits, and understandings from one generation to the next. So, Rawlinson wrote from a Lamarckian perspective, a very common belief system in the 1800s. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, in his *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809), proposed that ideas and characteristics, effectively experience, could be passed from parent to child, creating a kind of evolution of the species over time in the accumulation of inherited knowledge.

Neither Lindsay nor Rawlinson were unique in embracing a Lamarckian philosophy. The influence of Lamarck could be felt well into the 1900s. Sigmund Freud's Oedipal theory, for example, was based on the Lamarckian inheritability of ideas.[89] And Theodore Roosevelt was also a Lamarckian.[90] In citing Rawlinson, Lindsay highlighted his understanding of race and language as well as making a claim to intellectual status. Lamarck suggested that races could change over time, that races were mutable.[91] This was a core tenet to Lindsay's philosophy of race, the possibility of change, and ultimately that was what allowed him to end his poem, "The Congo," with "The Hope of Their Religion" (*Collected Poems* 182). Lindsay saw that "Hope" as carrying within it the possibility of change.

So, Lindsay's arguments were based on Carlyle, Ruskin, Henri, and Rawlinson among others; but he directed his argument *to* Charlie Chaplin and D. W. Griffith, to the artistic businessmen of film. Lindsay characterized his book as "an open letter to Griffith

---

[89] Adolf Grunbaum. *Physics, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis: Essays in Honor of Adolf Grunbaum*. Robert Sonne Cohen and Larry Lauden, Eds. (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), 163.
[90] Thomas G. Dyer. *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race,* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 39-40.
[91] Lamarck's proper name was Jean-Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet Chevalier de la Marck. However, he is most often referred to as Lamarck.

and the producers and actors he has trained," and it is easy to see why (*Art* 124). The major films Lindsay lauded in his *Art of the Moving Picture—Birth of a Nation*, *Judith of Bethulia*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Avenging Conscience*, and *Intolerance*—were Griffith films. Griffith's films addressed the need for order (most often a middle class order); they often had an historical basis, addressed justice for the lower classes and the hypocrisy of the better classes, while speaking to the need for community. Griffith's films were also often drawn from literary texts. He produced "narrative films with moral lessons that would instruct as well as entertain." And he highlighted the lives of the people who patronized his films, "immigrants and workers" (Ross 36-37). Though he had less interest in history, Chaplin also emphasized a social critique.

Charlie Chaplin "delighted in eliciting laughs by poking fun at the 'better' classes" (Ross 46). His sense of humor was designed to appeal to "immigrants and wage earners" (Ross 80). And his humor was based on mocking the respectability and hypocrisy of the better classes. Lindsay praised Chaplin's denunciation of commerce in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, but he also said, "I do not like Chaplin's work, but I have to admit the good intentions and the enviable laurels" (*Art* 24). Lindsay would have liked the humor in Chaplin's films. One of the inscriptions in the pen and ink drawings on the back cover of his *Collected Poems* (1927) read: "To begin, we must have a sense of humor and learn to smile." Lindsay would have appreciated the sense of justice implicit in Chaplin's films, the oft repeated theme, found in his *Work* (1915) and *The Floorwalker* (1916), of the honest poor unjustly suspected of theft. Chaplin's films generally promoted only an individual subversiveness, not collective action. So an overall sense of

order could still be seen to pervade the action with only the character played by Charlie as an individual exception (Ross 46, 81). The reason I think Lindsay would not have liked Chaplin's films would have been personal. On stage, Chaplin most often portrayed an innocent who inadvertently brought chaos with him wherever he went, and that reminds me of no one so much as Lindsay himself. We saw Lindsay refer to himself as the village idiot in the "Introduction" to this dissertation. And in his award winning autobiographical poem "Twenty Years Ago" (1928), he tells us he was never able to escape his identity or role as a fool.

Lindsay wanted his *Art of the Moving Picture* to have an effect on those people who were actually producing films (Wolfe 9). It is unclear if he was ever successful with that. However, D. W. Griffith made a point of distributing copies of Thomas Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* to every member of the cast of his *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), a film recreating the events of the French Revolution. And in his synopsis of *Orphans of the Storm*, Griffith made the very Carlylian observation "that [while] the tyranny of kings and nobles is hard to bear, . . . the tyranny of the mob under blood-lusting rules is intolerable."[92] Carlyle couldn't have said that better himself. One doesn't know where Griffith's interest in Carlyle came from, but there were a lot of histories that would have been more factually accurate than Carlyle's. The choice of Carlyle's *French Revolution* as an organizational text can be seen as a philosophical statement delineating Griffith's artistic, creative, and political orientation. The fact of the French Revolution was not Carlyle's strength. The meaning of the Revolution was his issue.

[92] William K. Everson, *American Silent Film* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 181-82.

D. W. Griffith may have paid lip service to the philosophy Vachel Lindsay articulated in *Art of the Moving Picture*. One doesn't know. But Lindsay seemed to think that was the case. In a letter to Jane Addams, dated October 29, 1916, Lindsay wrote: "People in the commercial end of the business consider the last section of the book where the people around you would approve—they consider the last sections mere moon-talk. Griffith and Sargent are polite enough to let me take them to school as it were, but not to church." The "moon-talk" was a reference to Lindsay's belief in "the future of film as a means to achieve cultural and spiritual salvation," what Carlyle would have referred to as "splendor" (Wolfe 17-18). In a day and time when D. W. Griffith could make 500 pictures between 1908 and 1913, Lindsay's philosophy of film would have switched the emphasis from quantity and speed to content and message. That change would not have met the business needs of the people in the field (Ross 37). Most business people would not have been so much interested in a cultural revolution as the necessary progress towards their next film.

Lindsay wrote over and over and over again that his conception of film had nothing to do with money. The idea was art, the creation and depiction of history as artistry, projecting that history into the future. Lindsay wrote:

> My poor little sermon is concerned with a great issue, the clearing of the way for a critical standard, whereby the ultimate photoplay may be judged. I cannot teach office-boys ways to make "quick money" in the "movies." That seems to be the delicately implied purpose of the mass of

> books on the photoplay subject. They are, indeed a sickening array (*Art* 31).

Even when Lindsay addressed the idea of propaganda, as he frequently did in the text, the word did not carry the sense of coercive manipulation, but of paternalism. Our sensibility approaches the definition Francis M. Cornford placed on the word "propaganda" in the aftermath of World War I: "That branch of the art of lying which consists in very nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies."[93] Lindsay saw "propaganda" as a way of promoting right thinking. He didn't see it as insidious. He saw the word more in the sense of "promotion," without the commercial connotation of advertising.

Lindsay promoted a very narrow range of films, and the films that escaped mention were as interesting as the ones he addressed. He ignored *From Dusk to Dawn* (1913), *The High Road* (1915), *What is to be Done?* (1914), *The Ghetto Seamstress* (1910), *The Paymaster* (1906), *The Mill Girl* (1907), or *The Jungle* (1914), films that promoted sympathy for the poor, radical class action, and the possibility of obtaining political power for the lower classes. He did not mention *Votes for Women* (1912) or *Eighty Million Women Want—?* (1913), though in *The Art of the Moving Picture* he seemed to argue the Woman's Christian Temperance Union perspective on the saloon,

[93] Richard Wood, Ed, *Film and Propaganda in America: A Documentary History: World War I.* Volume I. (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990), ix. Francis MacDonald Cornford was an English classical scholar and poet.

and the right of women to both vote and lead political action in his *Golden Book of Springfield*.

The films Lindsay promoted emphasized religion and conservative values. When Lindsay wrote that he did not intend "that human nature be suddenly altered," the frame of "human nature" could be understood to encompass a broad category of social activity (*Art* 164). We will examine three films that Lindsay addressed in *Art of the Moving Picture*: *Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Enoch Arden* (1915), and *Judith of Bethulia* (1914).[94]

Because the films are available online, the reader does not have to take this writer's perspective as definitive. The reader can see for herself. This is a valuable opportunity regarding one of our earlier arguments. It was Stanley Kauffman's perspective that speaking in the theatre rather than filling that silence with background music was "sheer quirk." Lindsay's emphasis on conversation had a practical side, beyond language instruction. Lindsay addressed the annoyances of the musical accompaniment to the films of the day. He wrote, "Almost every motion picture theatre has its orchestra, pianist, or mechanical piano" (*Art* 129). But he added that the filmmakers did not provide sheet music with the films. Consequently, when the film version of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was shown, the pianist "played 'In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree' hour after hour because she did not know how to play 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'" (131). She had no sheet music to guide her. Lindsay's solution to the problem of distracting sound-effects was to quit filling the air with "noise," and allow community-building conversation instead.

[94] All of these films are available to be viewed at www.YouTube.com.

All of these films come with background music. I found that music to be of no value in supporting the various films' message and intent. In many cases, I found that background music to be distracting and farcical; a case in point would be the battle scenes in *Judith of Bethula*, where the background music reminds one of nothing so much as the Keystone Kops. Conversely, if the reader were to review a clip from *The Italian*, where no background music was provided, the silence seems marvelously suited to conveying an air of sensitive and sophisticated subtlety. This is an opportunity to question this writer's perspective, as well as to evaluate Stanley Kauffmann's analysis of *Lindsay's* "quirkiness," independently.

Few would have understood Lindsay's intent in *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915) concerning *Birth of a Nation* (1915). In the two and a half pages he devoted to *Birth of a Nation*, Lindsay mentioned "A book by Gerald Stanley Lee that has some of the future scenarios in it ['great national movements of anger and joy'], a book that might well be dipped into by the reader before he goes to such a play as The Italian or The Battle, is the work which bears the title of this chapter: 'Crowds'" [sic] (49).[95] I couldn't have told you the title of Lee's book when I first read this section. The chapter from *Art of the Moving Picture* that Lindsay's statement appeared in was entitled "The Picture of Crowd Splendor." I read the reference to "Crowds" as referring to his chapter title.

Gerald Stanley Lee's book is entitled *Crowds: A Moving-Picture of Democracy* (1913). In the text, Lee—addressing Carlyle by name—pointedly amended Thomas

[95] *The Battle* (1911) was one of Griffith's outstanding films. *The Italian* (1915) was a famous film produced by Robert Ince.

Carlyle's definition of the hero. For Lee, and hence for Lindsay, a hero was a person who could lead another to a new understanding, not necessarily someone who could apply force more persuasively than another.[96] So, the reference to Lee's text was effectively a critique of *Birth of a Nation*, a critique of violence as the means to create community. Looking only at Lindsay's style, the reference to Lee's *Crowds* could be seen as a subtle and well considered rhetorical ploy. It not only communicated an exception to Carlyle, but an exception to *Birth of a Nation*. Politely, softly, and gently, Lindsay said, "Ultra violence is too much." Lindsay's reference to Lee's *Crowds* stood as a repudiation of Carlyle's reference to Cromwell at Drogheda. And it was done the way Lindsay liked to do things. It was a veiled critique, hidden in the text.

Virtually everything Lindsay said about the ideas or philosophy of *Birth of a Nation* was a critique. However, he praised the way the action was staged. He liked the tension that was built into the chase scenes. He liked the idea of proper order that the film presented, the action restoring the sense of community, and he particularly liked the suggestion of the future potential for that sense of order. In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay projected the idea of order he found in *Birth of a Nation* onto the world: "The World State is indeed far away. But as we peer into the Mirror Screen some of us dare to look forward to the time when the pouring streets of men will become sacred in each other's eyes, in pictures and in fact" (*Art* 49). But the racial violence Lindsay found in *Birth of a Nation* was another matter.

---

[96] Gerald Stanley Lee, *Crowds: A Moving-Picture of Democracy*. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913), 555.

Lindsay ascribed the racial violence in the film to "The Reverend Thomas Dixon," the author of *The Clansman* (1905), the novel that *Birth of a Nation* was based on. Lindsay found Griffith innocent of racial pandering:

> Griffith is a chameleon in interpreting his authors. Wherever the scenario shows traces of The Clansman, the original book by Thomas Dixon, it is bad. Wherever it is unadulterated Griffith, which is half the time, it is good. The Reverend Thomas Dixon is a rather stagy Simon Legree in his avowed views a deal like the gentleman with the spiritual hydrophobia in the latter end of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Unconsciously Mr. Dixon has done his best to prove that Legree was not a fictitious character [sic] (48).

Lindsay's attribution of social innocence to Griffith was flat untrue, and it would surprise me if Lindsay were unaware of that at the time. In an article to the *New York Globe*, dated April 1915, D. W. Griffith vociferously defended the racial perspectives of his film:

> The attack of the organized opponents to this picture is centered upon that feature of it which they deem might become an influence against the intermarriage of blacks and whites. The organizing opponents are white leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, including Oswald Garrison Villard and J. E. Spingarn, who hold official positions in this prointermarriage organization.
>
> May I inquire if you desire to espouse the cause of a society which openly boasts in its official organ, *The Crisis*, that it has been able to throttle "anti-intermarriage legislation" in over ten states? Do you know

> what this society means by "anti-intermarriage legislation"? It means that they successfully opposed bills which were framed to prohibit the marriage of Negroes to whites.
>
> Do you know that in their official organ, *The Crisis*, for March 1915, they brand 238 members of the Sixty-third Congress as "Negro baiters" because these Representatives voted to prohibit the marriage of Negroes to whites in the District of Columbia?[97]

Take note of the mention of Joel Springarn here. At the time of this conflict, and into the nineteen thirties, Joel Springarn was the Chairman of the Board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In our discussion of "The Congo" in the next chapter, we will see Mr. Springarn and Lindsay sharply, but politely, disagree concerning Lindsay's depictions of race in that poem. So, Lindsay and Griffith had at least one adversary in common. And Lindsay had, seemingly, come to the defense of Griffith, placing the banner of racism at the feet of Thomas Dixon. Throwing Dixon under the bus in order to spare Griffith responsibility for his actions would not have impressed or distracted Joel Springarn. And I doubt Joel Springarn failed to note where Lindsay stood in that argument.

In *The Clansman*, Thomas Dixon was aggressively, offensively, and demeaningly racist. Dixon purposively described the racial characteristics of blacks in a derogatory fashion. Drawing references to sexuality from the title of the film, *Birth of a Nation*, Susan Courtney in *Hollywood Fantasies* suggested that Griffith's films almost always

[97] Susan Courtney, *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race, 1903-1967* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 64.

focused on differences in race, class, and gender, and the effects those differences made (49). For Lindsay to highlight Griffith as *the* director he was addressing in the body of his text suggested there was something more drawing Lindsay's attention to these films than just stagecraft. Lindsay could have condemned Griffith's emphasis on both miscegenation and rape. He mentioned neither in his text. Lindsay could have critiqued the topics or politely disagreed. He didn't. At best he was vague and evasive. I think purposively so.

I have read no text where Lindsay made reference to rape. I doubt Lindsay thought of black men as rapists. But here was not only an opportunity to address the themes of rape and miscegenation, but the opportunity almost demanded commentary, and all one heard was silence. I think Lindsay's silence and praise reflected more a lack of political courage than a belief in black complicity in rape, though I can understand the consternation Joel Springarn must have felt with the overwhelming praise Lindsay heaped on Griffith's films.

Carlyle argued the prophet hero; Lindsay argued the same. Lindsay seemed to believe he, himself, was that prophet artist hero, or at least one of many. But for both Carlyle and Lindsay the hero was someone with the will to stand and act, the will to state the facts. This one clear failure to take a stance on the topic of miscegenation and rape when the opportunity presented itself shows Lindsay to have been more a politician and rhetorician than hero, leader, or moral guide. I doubt many people who knew Lindsay ever mistook him for a hero or moral guide.

At the heart of Lindsay's sense of order was the concept of black and white. He did believe in the mutability of race, and part of the purpose of *Art of the Moving Picture* was the creation or recreation of community in the face of massive immigration. But Lindsay's was a paternal respect in regards to race, the lower classes, and the new immigrants flooding the nation. A paternal respect and a sense of social inclusion did not necessarily mean an end to racial categories. He believed people should be socially included regardless of race, but that did not mitigate the existence of race in his eyes. I don't think Lindsay approved of black/white miscegenation any more than Griffith did, though I think Lindsay was more circumspect. And I would point to Lindsay's only novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), as a demonstration of his perspective on the place of race in marriage. In *The Golden Book*, the villain, Jim Kopensky, dies at the hands of his new Asian wife immediately after marrying outside of his race.

Within the same frame of his *Birth of a Nation* critique, Lindsay demonstrated a respect for the traditions of the South. Lindsay wrote: "Joel Chandler Harris, Harry Stillwell Edwards, George W. Cable, Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen, and Mark Twain are Southern men in Mr. Griffith's class. I recommend their works to him as a better basis for future Southern scenarios" (*Art* 48). Joel Chandler Harris is a name I expect most scholars would recognize; he chronicled the folklore of the black South, in sometimes deprecating ways. Harry Stillwell Edwards wrote one of the best received pro slavery novels of the twentieth century: *'Eneas Africanus* (1919). This was the story of a black retainer who remained faithful to his master long after the Civil War. George W. Cable was a novelist who attempted to reconcile his affection for the South with his

fierce opposition to slavery. He wrote *The Grandissimes* (1880), which spoke to the need for black civil rights.[98] Thomas Nelson Page was a novelist, political commentator, and Ambassador to Italy during WWI. He wrote twenty-two books dedicated to the Southern ideal of honor and chivalry, often depicting the image of happy slaves on the plantation. James Lane Allen was a novelist who wrote of religious doubt in *The Reign of Law* (1900). And Mark Twain. . . . Mark Twain wrote of all of these things, and just like Lindsay it would have been difficult to pin him down. However, the issue here was Lindsay's implicit definition of "Southern men," and "Mr. Griffith's class."

Booker T. Washington did not make the list. And Lindsay both knew of Washington and had written a poem in tribute to the man: "The Booker Washington Trilogy." As we will see in our discussion of Lindsay's only novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), Lindsay's sense of black/white relations reflected a separate but equal perspective. He did not see blacks as part of the South or as members of "Mr. Griffith's class," but he did see them as "men," which I would amend to human beings. This distinction allowed for equivocation. On the one hand Lindsay promoted respect for blacks within society. On the other hand it was a sense of respect contained *within* a separate but equal social hierarchy.

Lindsay was suggesting to Griffith that there were other solutions available in regards to slavery and civil rights than the violence to be found in *Birth of a Nation*. But

[98] Shelly Fisher Fishkin, in *A Historical Guide to Mark Twain* (2002), noted George Washington Cable's "outspoken pleas for civil rights and social justice as a journalist, and his candid treatment of the thorny issue of miscegenation in his fiction, led the South to violently reject him" (151). Shelly Fisher Fishkin, "Mark Twain and Race," *A Historical Guide to Mark Twain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 151.

he was also suggesting the value to be found in maintaining a conservative social order. The film historian Clyde Taylor wrote of *Birth of a Nation* as the story of national unity re-achieved. And he argued that the focus on the film's aesthetics served to hide its racist orientation: "It is this mystifying aura orchestrated by the art-culture system that has deterred the recognition of the *Birth of a Nation* as one of the most accomplished articulations of fascism, of twentieth-century evil."[99] Lindsay, as Carlyle, wanted fairness and respect for all people, but within an identifiable order. However, also like Carlyle, Lindsay viewed race as an inherent form of order and that human nature could not be suddenly or casually altered. Lindsay saw race as a categorization of humanity within a larger hierarchy (*Art* 164). I doubt that dual statement has ever been properly understood. Ultimately, Lindsay was arguing a nation building initiative in the amalgamation of white, but not black. Clyde Taylor wrote:

> During the birth of cinema, for example, social Darwinian and eugenics paradigms dominated the meaning of race, promoting the notion of a natural hierarchy of human cultures and histories. At the top of the so-proscribed evolutionary ladder were people who counted as 'Anglo-Saxons' and, then, the rest of the 'Caucasians'; at the bottom: 'Mongoloids' and 'Negroids' (Taylor *The Birth of Whiteness* 4).

Lindsay often rightly complained of people misunderstanding his racial intent, but he called that misunderstanding down on himself. And I think he did so purposively, with political intent, in an attempt to avoid the heavier blow. But that too was the argument

[99] Clyde Taylor, "The Re-Birth of the Aesthetic." *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*. Daniel Bernardi, Ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 20, 34.

one could draw from Gerald Lee's *Crowds*, persuasion, discussion, and political argumentation, but not force.

Lindsay's argument, concerning the utility of film, was to teach the new immigrants proper behavior, to Americanize them. In arguing an acceptance of Griffith's social perspective, sans violence, Lindsay condoned teaching the parameters of race as a part of what it meant to be American. Part of the purpose of film was to teach the new immigrants their place in the new scheme of things. Lindsay wanted to teach a new inclusive order through the medium of film, and the mechanism, the symbolism, of the process he taught accepted the ordering categories of race. But film not only taught the weak, the new immigrants, or the poor. It ordered and structured everything within reach. It was a reflexive process, teaching the teacher what to think. Ideally, that is what Lindsay wanted, a teaching process that encompassed everything, but I'm fairly sure he never intended that molding process to apply to himself. Lindsay wanted to reshape the world without having been reshaped. It takes more substance to stand alone, and to be a hero, than Lindsay ever seemed to understand.

Susan Courtney, in *Hollywood Fantasies* (2003), made a cogent argument that I think has application with regards to Vachel Lindsay. She argued displacement as the primary process of Griffith's technique. She argued that it was the weakness, the inability of white males to protect their wives, mothers, and daughters that was demonstrated in the suffering of the white female protagonists in *Birth of a Nation*. She argued that it was the failure of white males to maintain order, their failure to maintain

their position at the top of the social hierarchy that was depicted in the suffering of white women in Griffith's films. She argued that *Birth of a Nation* was about the inadequacy of white masculinity. I find that a persuasive way of looking at Lindsay and his travails with the women of his day.

We have seen that Edgar Lee Masters depicted Lindsay's ongoing relational and sexual problems with women. All of the films we will examine, films Lindsay highlighted as exceptional, addressed the failure of a male to successfully function as father, brother, husband, lover, or son. Courtney argued that *Birth of a Nation* was about that failure redressed. I find Lindsay's choice of films in this regard, revealing. Though uncomfortable projecting displacement to the society at large, I think Susan Courtney was correct regarding Lindsay the individual. My difficulty here is in seeing Lindsay as a representative American male. We've seen that Lindsay both claimed a biracial status and that he was epileptic. The two in concert would seem to disqualify him as a representative American male. But Courtney also suggested multiple possible interpretations from each scenario, the idea being that race and class and disease could be seen as interchangeable symbols. In *Enoch Arden* (1915) we have an example of multiple possible interpretations concerning male inadequacy. The multiple and simultaneous interpretations allow for a saving grace—God—who would reward individual recognition and acceptance of those same inadequacies. The ambivalence of the symbol system allowed for interpretations. But ultimately the symbol system was controlled and defined by the powers driving the films.

We have seen that Lindsay was of mixed race, of Indian and European heritage. If we take that knowledge into an examination of *Enoch Arden* (1915), then we can project both a social and individual interpretation impacting on Lindsay's personal life. Lindsay stated in his *Art of the Moving Picture* that *Enoch Arden* was the "most successful motion picture drama of the intimate type ever placed before mine eyes." But he also stated that he expected his audience to have read Alfred Tennyson's poem, "Enoch Arden," before viewing the film (*Art* 34). This expectation demonstrated the literary nature underlying both Lindsay's and D. W. Griffith's approach to film. We saw that *Birth of a Nation* was based on Thomas Dixon's novel, *The Clansman*. Griffith tended to translate literary texts into film. The other Griffith film we will examine, *Judith of Bethulia* (1914), as well as *The Avenging Conscience* (1914), both fall within the category of literary translation. Lindsay spoke glowingly of the film, *Enoch Arden's*, ability to interpret Tennyson's poem (*Art* 34). I did not find that to be the case. If I had not read Tennyson's poetic version of *Enoch Arden* first, I would not have been able to follow the action in the film. Actually, even having read the poem, I still found the action in the film difficult to follow. The film version of *Enoch Arden* was able to demonstrate the power of class pursuant to family and love. The film version did not communicate the racial perspective of the poem. The moral, religious, and transcendent aspects of the text came through in the film, though not as powerfully as in the text.

As could be expected, Thomas Carlyle addressed the biblical Enoch in his history, *On Heroes and Hero Worship*.[100] One could expect any reader of *On Heroes* to have noted this. Carlyle and Tennyson were also friends. So, we have a philosophical connection built into the poem. The biblical Enoch was noted for "walking with God," which denoted a devout life, and that was a large part of the storyline of Tennyson's poem.

Alfred Tennyson's long poem, "Enoch Arden," was originally published in 1864. The poem was put to music and performed in Europe in the late 1890s, and D. W. Griffith made film versions of the text in 1908, 1911, and 1915. The poem developed a love triangle that could be seen as a variation on another respected poem of Tennyson's, "Locksley Hall" (1835). Both "Locksley Hall" and "Enoch Arden" addressed race, class, and miscegenation, projecting a future world from these social interactions.

There are three major characters in Tennyson's poem, "Enoch Arden:" Philip Ray, the miller's son; Enoch Arden, the poor orphaned son of a sailor; and Annie Lee. The biblical Philip was one of the twelve disciples (*John* 1:43-44). Anne is traditionally represented as the mother of Mary. There were two Enochs in the Bible. One was the eldest son of Cain. The second was seventh in line of descent from Adam, a pious man of God and the subject of the poem (Jeffrey 237). For the Judeao Christian audience Lindsay addressed, the meaning of "Enoch Arden" as a story of piety would have been clear.

---

[100] David L. Jeffrey, Ed. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1992), 238.

In the poem, the three major characters are first presented as children who grew up playing “house” together, Annie Lee as mistress with Enoch and Philip vying for the role of husband. Enoch was the stronger of the boys, apt to anger and violence; Annie was the peace maker. Philip had blue eyes, was reticent, quiet, family oriented, reverent of his father, and loved Annie as much as Enoch. Enoch had gray eyes, was hard working, diligent, a sailor, brave, and weather beaten. As adults, Enoch asked Annie first and the two were married; they began to raise a family, a girl and a boy, and Enoch began to take his responsibility as a father seriously, trying to raise his children to a better life than the one he was born to.

Enoch’s life as a sailor was dangerous and hard. But his family knew no real need for seven years. Then, Enoch fell, broke an arm and a leg, and another child was born, a son, born sickly. The implication here was one of heredity intruding on bliss. A wife, three children, a father on his sick bed, unemployed (with no income), the life of one of his children in doubt, and Enoch had a dream/premonition of his children living hand-to-mouth. Enoch prayed to God, asking for intersession, asking that God save his children, regardless of what might happen to Enoch. And this was both the key action and statement of the poem; everything else followed from the prayer. God will now save Enoch’s children, finding them a *proper* home.

From out of nowhere, Enoch was offered a job on a ship bound for China. He sold his ready assets, provided for his family as best he could, set his wife up as a dry goods merchant and prepared to take advantage of a once-in-a-life-time opportunity. His wife had a premonition of his demise and asked him to reconsider his intention to sail to

China; Enoch prayed that his children be saved regardless of whatever became of him, repeatedly, and cast his fate to God and the sea.

Annie proved to be a poor business woman, though a fine charitable human being. She was honest, which Tennyson tells us doesn't make for much of a sales woman; in the best of times she charged minimally for her wares and in poor times she sold for less than she paid. She was well on the way to bankruptcy; the boy who was born sickly died. And it was at this time that Philip, now the town's miller, well-to-do, reacquainted himself with Annie and offered to help provide for her children. Philip put the children in school, treated them as his own, and fed the family. Ten years after Enoch left for China, Philip asked Annie to be his wife. They wed. Philip was a model husband, prosperous, a middle class miller who was sensitive and valued education.

Though seemingly mundane, the implication to these actions are noteworthy. Poverty in Lindsay's day was frequently associated with punishment from God. Poverty, as seen in Richard Dugdale's study of the Jukes, was also seen as a heredity trait.[101] Arthur Estabrook, in *The Jukes in 1915* (1916), concluded that Dugdale's study "does not demonstrate the inheritance of criminality, pauperism, or harlotry, but it does show that heredity with certain environmental conditions determines criminality, harlotry, and pauperism."[102] Enoch's tendency to pauperism could be seen as inherited. On the other hand, Philip sending poverty stricken children to school suggested the mutability of both

[101] Richard Dugdale, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891).
[102] Arthur Estabrook, *The Jukes in 1915* (Washington: The Carnegie Institution, 1916), 1.

heredity and class. It also, however, suggested a paternal model of social organization. These were ideals that Lindsay would have embraced.

We find out that Enoch was lost at sea. All of his shipmates died. And though Enoch survived, it took him more than eleven years to find his way back to England, an old man, broken before his time. He found Annie married to Philip, his children referring to Philip as "father," and the children that Annie has borne with her new husband. Enoch saw this as the hand of God at work. He saw that his children had been provided for, as he had asked, and he determined to leave God's arrangement undisturbed. He did not contact Annie, and she never found out he survived. Eking out a living, eventually he died, returning to the embrace of God and the crippled son who preceded him.

The social, racial, and economic clues to the text are straight forward, but, as Susan Courtney suggested, they allowed the audience to see, interpret, and experience both poem and film from multiple perspectives. The audience could choose which characters to identify with. They could choose which symbols to emphasize in coming *to* an interpretation. Each character could be seen in a positive light, which allowed the individuals of the audience to employ their own symbol system hierarchies in constructing "the best," or most applicable, meaning to the text. Ms. Courtney wrote that the early Biograph films "suggest a filmic history of difference that begins with more variable modes of fantasizing identity":

> [T]his analysis invites us to refuse too simplistic a division between early 'experiments' and classical conventions, demanding instead that we

> reevaluate precisely the singularity of the latter by reading them through the lens of ancestors they will sometimes attempt to bury (49).

So, the easiest and most direct interpretation would be one of wealth and class, which recalls the perspective of the Reverend Russell Conwell, in *Acres of Diamonds* (1870). Conwell wrote:

> I won't. . . but what I sympathize with the poor, but the number of poor. . . to be sympathized with is very small. To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins. . . is. . . wrong, no doubt about it. . . (21).

At least from Russell Conwell's perspective, wealth could carry the meaning of God's approval, and poverty the measure of his sanction. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle identified the middle class as that group which would restore order and stability to society (6). Phillip was the village miller. He was financially well-off, probably middle class. Not only was Phillip financially well off but refined. He was sophisticated, educated, and valued those traits in his children. He could support his family, feed and clothe them, and address their social and intellectual needs. Phillip winning Annie's hand could be seen as the culmination of the natural order of things. The way things should have been from the beginning.

Lindsay, the son of middle class parents, could easily have identified with this scenario, though I doubt he did. In his forties, maybe a decade after the publication of *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay was able to achieve a middle class income, but there is a difference between income and prosperity. Lindsay's wife, who had earned the college degree her husband had failed to achieve, took in washing to make ends meet,

and Lindsay was never able to satisfactorily account for where his money disappeared to. I think Lindsay might have viewed "Enoch Arden" as an idealized version of the way things should have been. But Lindsay was never Phillip in real life. He was never particularly industrious, and we have seen that in his last days he felt his wife was leaving him for a better mate.

Lindsay as Enoch seems a better fit. Enoch was prone to anger and violence, an orphan, father to a child born with a disability, a man who orphaned his own children, pauperized his family, and could not provide for his wife. One could argue this as the blueprint for the actual life Lindsay lived. Philip had blue eyes was reticent, middle-class, fairly wealthy, sensitive, and valued education. Annie was blond, honest, diligent, loving and peaceful. These were the racial cues of the early nineteen hundreds. The Irish and Italians were depicted as violent and emotional, uncivilized. Enoch was a violent man. He was an orphan and orphaned his own children. So, we have hereditary markers. He had fathered a weak child, which takes us to a eugenic argument. He was someone who genetically propagated those unfit to live. Enoch also had gray eyes.

Mr. Dillingham, author of the *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (1907), attributed gray eyes to the Irish.[103] The Italians were depicted as: "excitable, impulsive, highly imaginative, impracticable; as an individualist having little adaptability to highly

[103] Madison Grant went into great detail on the racial meaning of eye-color, in *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916): ". . . in the British Isles the Scottish and Irish populations in which red hair and gray or green eyes are abundant have rather more of this Celtic strain in them than have the flaxen haired Teutons, whose china-blue eyes are clearly not Celtic" (175). Grant portrays the Celts as related to but less evolved than the "china-blue" eyed Nordic race. The Celts were further down the racial hierarchy than the Anglo Saxons. Mr. Dillingham, *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), 79. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 175.

organized society" (82). Matthew Jacobson quotes from the *Atlantic Monthly*, describing the Irish as "'[lacking] the solidity, the balance, the judgment, the moral staying power of the Anglo-Saxon'—solidity, balance, judgment, and moral staying power, of course, representing the keystone of a self-governing republic."[104] Matthew Jacobson cited Davenport's *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (1911) on the racial aspects of the Irish, Italians and Jews:

> The Irish, on the other hand, were in Davenport's estimation genetically given to 'alcoholism, considerable mental defectiveness and a tendency to tuberculosis.' Even the Irish penchant for machine politics and 'graft' was traceable to their blood inheritance. Italians, meanwhile, inherited a 'tendency for crimes of personal violence'; and Jews' defective blood, seen most readily in a vicious, race-specific brand of individualism and materialism, set them directly on 'the opposite extreme from the early English. . . (*Barbarian* 159).

Enoch was portrayed in the same way the Irish and Italians were, a violent, uncouth, uncivilized lout, unlikely to conform, and genetically unfit for civilization. One wonders which of the major characters an epileptic would have emphasized with in the early part of the twentieth century.

There was also the implication of miscegenation in Enoch's relationship with Annie, but this would not have been the same issue Lindsay faced in *Birth of a Nation*. Lindsay tended to class all Europeans as white, and that was part of his message, the idea

[104] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 192.

of creating community through integrating the new immigrants into American life. Not everyone would have seen an Irish and Anglo Saxon marriage so charitably. Lindsay tended to see race in continental terms. Black and white marriage, Asian and white marriage, would have seemed more questionable to Lindsay than any mixture of Irish, English, German, or French.

The biblical Enoch was portrayed as a man who walked with God. So, even if he were not the best provider, or the best father, or the more genetically sound, being a man associated with God would have been no small compensation. It required the willingness to defer his life for a lifetime, but the spiritual and moral order argued by Lindsay, Carlyle, and Tennyson would have valued the piety in that act. So, spiritual rewards for Enoch, though cursed with worldly contempt: an otherworldly hero, perhaps, but a hero nevertheless. Even outcastes for reason of heredity, race, and class could still claim value within this scenario.

We have seen that Susan Courtney argued the displacement of pain onto white women as a sign of white male inability to properly dominate society, and certainly in the rape scenes in *Birth of a Nation*, and the economic suffering of Annie we have a like demonstration of male inadequacy. But in the texts examined here another theme repeatedly emerged, the pain or death of a child. In "Enoch Arden," the crippled child of Enoch dies. The death of a child cropped up often in the texts Lindsay praised: *Cabria* (1914), and *The Italian* (1915) come immediately to mind. Lindsay experienced this same trauma in surviving the death of his sisters as a child. I think Susan Courtney was right in her argument for the displacement of one pain for another, but I think she was

particularly cogent in arguing the complexity of the symbolism, the symbols carrying multiple and contradictory messages (75). At some point I wonder if the messages might simply become so complex and fraught with possibility that they cease to be social commentary at all, becoming purely individual in their symbolic intent. I feel comfortable in the validity of arguing Lindsay's interpretation of any given film from his texts. I'm much less comfortable in viewing Lindsay as a representative American male, and that strikes to the heart of Lindsay's philosophy of film. He saw film as having the ability to unite the symbols within one over arching intent. I suspect he overreached himself in that regard.

Lindsay wrote: "*Judith of Bethulia* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* have impressed me as the two most significant photoplays I have ever encountered" (*Art* 53-54). That was not the perspective of film critic William Everson in *American Silent Film* (1978). Writing of *Judith of Bethulia*, Everson noted that "the action scenes became directionless," the movie was too long by half, and only the acting of Blanche Sweet (as Judith) and Henry B. Walthall (as Holofernes) merited attention (73-74). I disagree with Emerson's view of Blanche Sweet's acting, and contrary to Lindsay's perspective I see little aesthetic value to the film. And I don't believe Lindsay's evaluation reflected the aesthetic merit of the film either. There were, however, two aspects of *Judith* that would have drawn Lindsay's attention and praise. The first was Mae Marsh, who played Naomi in the film. Lindsay initiated a correspondence with Ms. Marsh in 1915, and continued that correspondence for several years. And that correspondence seems to have had a

romantic intent.[105] The second issue was race, which, for the purposes of our discussion can be broken down into the sub categories of racial conflict, miscegenation, drunkenness, and religion. The Jewish Judith killed and beheaded the drunken Assyrian Holofernes to avoid miscegenation and preserve the Jewish state she represented. These were the themes Lindsay addressed over and over again in *Art of the Moving Picture*, and were it not for the fact that Judith seduced Holofernes, and not the other way around, this film might carry more of a resemblance to *Birth of a Nation*. When Lindsay praised *Judith of Bethulia* as one of the "most significant photoplays" he had ever seen, I interpret that as a reference to the subject matter of the film and not a reference to aesthetics or cinematography.

Judith of Bethulia was a film version of the biblical text.[106] The Assyrians, led by General Holofernes, had invaded Israel and were besieging the town of Bethulia. In desperate fighting, the villagers threw the attackers from the city walls. Judith, a beautiful, demure, devout Jewish widow, was sent from the town in the aftermath of one of the battles to lure and ensnare the Assyrian General. The idea was to trap Holofernes in love, but Judith herself fells in love with the General. However, and despite her own personal feelings, when the time came, she beheaded Holofernes; the Assyrian army collapsed in the aftermath of Holofernes' death, and Israel was saved (*Art* 56-57). Writing of Judith, Lindsay noted, "She is in a sense Bethulia itself, the race of Israel

[105] Anita Loos. "A Poet in Love." *Fate Keeps on Happening: Adventures of Loreli Lee and Other Writings*. Ray Pierre Corsini, Ed. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1984), 162.
[106] The Book of Judith is a part of the Apocrypha, books that may or may not be included in a denomination's Bible. The Book of Judith appears in the Old Testament of the Catholic Bible. The book could be considered a historical novel within the frame Carlyle would have used.

made over into a woman. . . (56). Lindsay clearly saw the Jews as a race and not only a religion. In writing of a prospective film on the prophet Abraham, Lindsay wrote: "Let the film show the final gift of Isaac to the aged Sarah, even the boy who is the beginning of a race that shall be as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea for multitude (*Art* 61). And Mr. Dillingham in his *Dictionary of Races* (1911) saw the Hebrews as a race as well (73).[107] The important distinction to be made here is that neither Lindsay nor Griffith saw the Jews in terms of Charles Davenport's *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (Jacobson *Barbarian* 159). The Jews were not seen as either "defective" or "vicious" in any of Lindsay's works.

Judith was not only a film. It also carried the sanction of a biblical text; we are enjoined to see this not only as *a* story but as the heavenly ordained way of the world. Judith saved her people, her village, her community, her race by forsaking her own love of Holofernes for duty and responsibility. Lindsay interpreted the ending of the film, telling the reader that Judith obviously regretted the necessity of her act: "The sword of sorrow is there. . . [but] she stands among the nobles like a holy candle" (57). Judith personified racial piety in the execution and decapitation of Holofernes. For a sometimes pacifist, Lindsay seems to have had an amazing tolerance for decapitation, but clearly the decapitation of Holofernes was justified in Lindsay's eyes as an act both in defense of religion and hence the purity of the race. Where Lindsay distanced himself from the racial violence in *Birth of a Nation,* in *Judith of Bethulia* he embraced it.

[107] V. G. Rocine in *Heads, Faces, Types, Races* (1910) writes much the same thing as Mr. Dillingham concerning race, though Rocine does it in a more concise style if a little more abusively (303, 421-02). V. G. Rocine, *Heads, Faces, Types, Races* (Chicago: Vaught-Rocine, 1910).

I see the distinction between the two films as threefold. First, the discussion of *Judith* occurred in Lindsay's chapter entitled "Religious Splendor." *Judith* was meant to demonstrate and communicate the power of religious belief as an organizing and nation building motif. So, Judith was to be our heroine, and not our villain. More than that, Lindsay clearly saw Judith as a demonstration of Carlyle's prophet heroes, people with the ability to act and lead decisively, using belief as an organizing motif. Second, while her motivation was ethically questionable, Judith's relationship with Holofernes did not carry the suggestion of rape to be found in *Birth of a Nation*. This was, more or less, the consensual activity between two adults. And though there seemed to be the possibility of miscegenation in the storyline, in the end that issue was moot. Finally, there was no suggestion in *Judith* of a mass or purposeful movement to enable miscegenation, as there was in *Birth of a Nation*. In *Birth of a Nation* a law was passed to allow for white and black interracial marriage. In *Judith of Bethulia*, even though Judith seemingly acted to question miscegenation on behalf of the Jewish nation, she acted alone, and as an individual. Masses of Jewish women were not encouraged to follow her example. As a filmed illustration of a religious text, the culmination of the action was a foregone conclusion. There was never a real possibility of miscegenation to the story.

Susan Courtney suggested D. W. Griffith educated and encouraged the audience to see the world from a whitened perspective (*Hollywood* 26). We can see that effort in *Judith of Bethulia*. Yes, Judith was Jewish, and Lindsay clearly saw Jews as a separate race. But within the context of Jews versus Assyrians (or Arabs) the person of Judith asks for a decision to be made: Who does one empathize with? Between the obviously

religious Judith and the drunken general Holofernes the proper choice is fairly clear. One chooses the emissary of God and not the drunken lout. Drunkenness, and in *The Golden Book of Springfield* the use of cocaine, were Lindsay's markers for the less desirable races. In "The Congo," Lindsay began his poem describing black Americans as drunken "barrel house kings." Drunkenness and drug use marked the enemies of American democracy in his *Golden Book of Springfield*. Lindsay tied drugs and alcohol to race and class.

The context of *Judith of Bethulia* demonstrated that even though the Jews were a separate race, they were clearly more like "us" than "them." Part of Lindsay's nation building endeavor involved promoting that sense of inclusiveness. In his *Golden Book of Springfield,* Lindsay included Jews as a separate but equal category of democratic Americans. It is worth noting that the primary villain in Lindsay's *Golden Book* was of Arabic descent. Lindsay clearly made a distinction between Arab and Jew in his novel. Insofar as the Book of Judith appears in the Catholic Bible, holding up a Catholic/Jewish heroine highlighted the admirable racial qualities of two of the largest blocks of American immigrants at that time. In *Judith of Bethulia*, Lindsay saw a film paving the way for a new and more inclusive frame of "American." The tenets of Carlyle's philosophy fairly leapt from Griffith's *Judith.*

Much as with the internet, one of the fears concerning the early motion pictures was that the cinema would be put to sexual purposes (Ross 28). Lindsay addressed this issue in his chapter entitled "The Substitute for the Saloon." He wrote:

> The usual saloon equipment to delight the eye is one so-called `leg' picture of a woman. . . . Many times, no doubt, these boys and young men have found visions of a sordid kind while gazing on the actress. . . . How could memories of Ladies' Entrance squalor be made into Castles in Granada or Carcassonne? (*Art* 140).

Lindsay defined the saloon as a byproduct of both race and class. He situated the saloon in the "slum," and portrayed the patrons as "immigrants" (140-41). So, "squalor" reflected Lindsay's interpretation of the surroundings virtually any woman would find in a bar. The "Ladies' Entrance" referred to a separate entrance where ladies could enter the bar without having to pass before rowdies. Another example of how the world Lindsay lived in was different from today. But I'd like to focus attention on women as representations of sexuality and how Lindsay tied this image of sexuality to the saloon. In the above quote Lindsay argued transcendence, and the need to bring culture, which Lindsay defined as beauty, to the people. Drunkenness, physical squalor and overemphasis on sexuality conflicted with Lindsay's sense of transcendence.

When you look deeper into Lindsay's letters and texts, you come away with a different sense of who Lindsay was and what he was arguing than one would find in *Art of the Moving Picture* alone. Glenn Wolfe, in *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist* (1973), used a letter from Vachel Lindsay to his mother to show how diligent and conscientious Lindsay was, concerning his education at the Ashcan School of Art. Lindsay's letter to his mother, dated January 31, 1904, made mention of two artists he

was studying, "the Japanese masters" "Utamaro and Hoksai" (Wolfe 49).[108] Conscientious is one interpretation to be drawn from the letter. Looking more carefully into the art of the two masters reveals a whole series of sexually explicit prints, prints and themes that would probably have stunned Lindsay's home town of Springfield, Illinois, let alone his parents. My favorite of these prints is Hokusai's "Dream of the Fisherman's Wife." The "Dream" is explicitly sexual, with at least two octopi thrown into the mix—two very well placed and suggestive octopi. We discussed Lindsay having been thrown from his parent's house for daring to sketch nudes for his art classes. Lindsay seldom outright lied, but that doesn't mean he was honest. He just understood how to hide the truth in the facts.

I have no problem with Lindsay studying nudes for their aesthetic effect, if that was what he was doing, and the prints *are* beautiful. But Lindsay's parents would have had an obvious problem with this, and Glenn Wolfe never suggested there could be anything more to the prints than a demonstration of Lindsay's conscientious diligence. In our discussion of Stanley Kauffmann we noted his casual approach to the text. Everything was known; there was nothing new to be discovered. To understand the text, Lindsay's first-of-a-kind review of film can't be casually read. The text needs to be explicated in depth. But in not knowing that, virtually everyone has missed the imbedded intent.

[108] That would be Zen (or Katsushika) Hokusai (1760-1849), and Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806). The commonly used dates for the birth and death of Hokusai are problematic and approximate. It is sometimes suggested that the original Hokusai died sometime around 1820. And that a successor married Hokusai's wife and assumed the original artist's name in order to exploit the fame of his predecessor.

Lindsay argued saloons and sex as a reason to apply the curative power of film. But Lindsay wasn't as innocent as he would have us, officially, believe. And his analysis of film spoke to the sense of gullibility he wanted the country to embrace. *The Art of the Moving Picture* spoke to the sense of gullibility *he* was willing to invest in. Truth did not carry an empirically predictive quality for Lindsay. Truth was something one *should* believe, and hence did believe, because it was one's responsibility to do so. Truth was a social responsibility: to believe. Using film as a form of propaganda to inculcate the masses was a tactic Lindsay wanted to impose on others. He didn't seem to have understood that it could just as easily have been used against him. Granting reality as a social construction, Lindsay seemed especially susceptible to the power of imagery. He wanted to believe. And in wanting to believe he was often deceived.

The screenwriter Anita Loos reminisced about her first meeting with Vachel Lindsay in her book *Fate Keeps on Happening* (1984). Ms. Loos wrote that sometime in 1915, which was the year of *The Art of the Moving Picture's* publication, Lindsay began writing to Mae Marsh, but that Ms. Marsh didn't know what to say to a poet who framed such intellectual prose. Mae Marsh felt intimidated by the intellectual tenor of the letters, and asked Anita Loos to answer the correspondence for her. So, Ms. Loos undertook a multi year correspondence on behalf of Mae Marsh. Anita Loos wrote that she remembered nothing of the letters except their ardent tone.

Ms. Loos wrote that at some undetermined point in time Lindsay arranged to meet Ms. Marsh in New York. And Mae and Anita arranged to make the meeting intimate and

memorable. Anita wrote that the only place Mae could meet Lindsay, with any assurance of privacy, was Anita's apartment, which apparently consisted of a series of rooms converted from an old bordello. Mae didn't know what to say to Lindsay. Lindsay didn't know he had really been writing to Anita for all those years, and the meeting went very badly.

Apparently, Lindsay was also intimidated at the prospect of meeting Mae Marsh in the flesh, so when he knocked on the door and entered the apartment he started shouting at the top of his lungs. He was shouting, reciting, his poetry, and he wouldn't stop. Anita Loos wrote: "The most accurate image I can conjure up of poor, darling Vachel, is that of the red-headed ventriloquist dummy called Mortimer Snerd" (164). Ms. Marsh didn't know what to say to a poet roaring in the living room, so she wandered off and didn't return. And that left Lindsay alone with Anita Loos. Anita said they began their correspondence all over again from that point, Lindsay being none the wiser, and it continued for several more years. Anita Loos wrote: "[T]he great tragedy of Vachel's life lay in the failure of the American dream to live up to the rugged promise of its past. And when he sensed that our native spirit was losing vitality, he lost his joy in living" and died (165). Ms. Loos ended her account of "Vachel and Me," the original title of the article, with a quote from Lindsay's letter of August 1920. Lindsay wrote: "I know I am a poor thing, but take me as I am and do it at once before it is too late." Anita Loos concluded: "Before it is too late: how prophetic those words became in the face of Vachel Lindsay's suicide" (165).

Lindsay wanted to believe the ardent and complex persona Mae Marsh portrayed on the silent screen. He needed the validation that image would bring to a man who understood only too well his own limitations. He wanted to believe she was the sophisticated and articulate woman both Anita Loos and her screen persona portrayed her as being, but inevitably Lindsay came from that episode looking like no one so much as the country bumpkin Uncle Josh, from *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902). In that film, Uncle Josh (played by the vaudevillian Cal Stewart) was unable to distinguish between a real woman and a woman projected on the screen.[109] Pretending a reality, rather than bringing that fantasy into tangible being, marks the difference between Carlyle's philosophical intent and Lindsay's demonstration of that philosophy.

It is easy to see why scholars such as Myron Lounsbury and Balz Engler would argue Lindsay as a postmodernist.[110] So often Lindsay's writings seem to revolve around fantasies. But one could just as easily turn that statement around, arguing Lounsbury and Engler forced Lindsay's prose into the structure of their own study, beliefs, and understandings, refusing to examine Lindsay's arguments in depth and in context because they thought everything was already known.

Myron Lounsbury and Balz Engler could argue Lindsay as a postmodernist instead of a conservative revolutionary seeking a return to the beliefs of the past only because they did not understand Lindsay's Carlyle connection. If one didn't look to the past, then it would be easy to see Lindsay from a postmodernist perspective.

---

[109] This film is also available to be viewed online at Youtube.com.
[110] Myron Lounsbury, Ed., *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies: A Second Book of Film Criticism by Vachel Lindsay* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1995). Balz Engler. *Poetry and Community* (Tubingen: Staffenburg Verlag, 1990).

Because Vachel Lindsay was presented, by Stanley Kauffmann among others, as an erratic and unreliable narrator, because Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo,* among others, reads as a thinly veiled racist critique of both Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* and "The Congo," because virtually everybody saw Lindsay as an idiot savant, his works have been dismissed as lacking in credibility. Lindsay was very unusual. He wasn't particularly artistically inclined, and though he was racist, he was no more racist than his instructors in the Ashcan School who built racial signifiers into their art. Lindsay and his work have been dismissed for spurious reasons; that doesn't mean they can't still be dismissed, but they ought to be examined in depth, first. But who would do such a thing? Who would put in the years of effort for such a marginal return just to resurrect a minor poet from his literary grave? Probably no one, and not just anyone could do it. However, there is another venue, with much more literary capital at stake. Major authors, such as Ishmael Reed and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., have staked their names on "The Congo" as Lindsay's racist contribution to American poetry. There is a target topic where one might make a difference. In the next chapter we will refute both Reed and Gates's perspective, a perspective shared by others, that "The Congo" was Lindsay's and only Lindsay's racist contribution to America. Turning that argument on its head we perhaps might lend some credibility to the need for a more thorough reading of Lindsay's texts.

Lindsay did have a different vision for America, one that has passed by the way. But what has been set aside as no longer viable still warrants historic consideration. Rejected possibilities speak to choices made. *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915) was a

first of its kind text on film criticism. It has circulated for almost a century now. And few seem to have read it the way Lindsay intended it to be read. Most readers, looking for the keys to Lindsay's text, have done so within the light of past interpretation. Were Thomas Kuhn able to speak from the grave, I'm sure he'd feel safe in his fame.

"A painful thought: past a certain point in time, history has not been real. Without realizing it, the whole human race seems to have suddenly left reality behind. . . . Our task and our duty would now be to uncover this point, and until we did we would have to persist in our present destruction." Jean Baudrillard.[111]

The question as to which is more reprehensible, the alleged custom in Haiti of eating a human being without cooking him or the authenticated custom in the United States of cooking a human being without eating him. The Haitian custom would have, at least, a utilitarian purpose in extenuation." James Weldon Johnson.[112]

"What Schlesinger and others have seen as an increasing radical critique of industrial capitalism was, rather, a conservative's growing awareness that it is industrial capitalism which has been the radical force in American society, generating social change of unforeseen consequence, heedlessly disruptive of human community." Ralph E. Luker.[113]

Chapter III

Black Face-paint Lies Disguised as Typeface:

Tactics of Poetic Expression

Most people remember J. R. R. Tolkien as the author of *The Hobbit* (1936) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55). Most forget, overlook, or never understood to begin with that he was also a prominent scholar of Old English and medieval literature at Oxford. In November 1936, J. R. R. Tolkien presented the Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture to the British Academy. This lecture has come down to us as in the form of an article entitled "Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics," in a book by the same name

[111] Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*. Translated by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990), 14.
[112] James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way: The Auto-Biography of James Weldon Johnson* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2000), 360.
[113] Ralph E. Luker, "The Social Gospel and the Failure of Racial Reform, 1877-1898." *Church History* (March 1977): 83.

(2006).[114] The purpose of Tolkien's discussion was to demonstrate the inherent difficulty in interpreting literature, in this case *Beowulf*, where there was only the text itself to base an interpretation on. But it also serves as a good point of departure for our discussion of Vachel Lindsay's infamous poem, "The Congo." In Lindsay's day "The Congo" was received as brilliant by the public at large, and that poem alone probably served as the foundation of his financial liquidity from the death of his mother in 1922 until his suicide on the fifth of December, 1931. But "The Congo" also generated sharp rebuttals, then and today.

In his discussion of *Beowulf*, Tolkien presented a demonstration of the slippery slope the interpretation of forgotten literature rests upon. There are some ideas, images, and motifs that can't be recovered from the past. There are some interpretations that can only be rendered as speculation, however persuasive or well informed. And his pointed critique was that few in his day had ever chosen to read Beowulf as art, "the poem as a poem." "Beowulf has been used as a quarry of fact and fancy far more assiduously than it has been studied as a work of art" (5). J. R. R. Tolkien argued that in the absence of context or comparative analysis the only recourse was to a poet's artistic persuasion.

Tolkien used an "allegory" in his lecture to carry his message home (7). He told the story of a man who had once built a tower of old stone, and over the years the archeologists and curiosity seekers came to look at the tower and tore it all apart, examining the stones for runes, pictures, hieroglyphs, treasure, religious significance and meanings. Tolkien's point was that this was all to no avail. In tearing the tower down

[114] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Christopher Tolkien, Ed. (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006),

they had destroyed the very purpose and clues to its construction: "from the top of that tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea" (8).

Like *Beowulf*, Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" seems to have been read in a vacuum. The assumption has always been that "The Congo" was Lindsay's personal statement, the man on the tower looking out on the sea. Lindsay's claim to have created the Higher Vaudeville has never been taken literally. The idea of the Higher Vaudeville was that you would take a work of popular culture and turn it to a higher purpose. To take the Higher Vaudeville literally would mean there would have been a master text that Lindsay could have based his "Congo" on. And as a result the commentary on "The Congo" has always been directed to Lindsay's personal and racist portrayal of "The Negro Race," the subtitle to the poem. From Tolkien's perspective, the discussion focused on artistry, fantasy, and speculation because there was nothing else to base the discussion on. Everything came down to opinion and authorial intent.

I will argue there was an original and primary text that Lindsay drew on in framing "The Congo." That "The Congo" was an early demonstration of his Higher Vaudeville. And that the poet's source material carried the burden of the poem's intent and meaning. Tolkien argued that when you have no contemporary sources, art is all that is left, and that has been the story of the critical analysis directed to "The Congo." We will argue the other side to that. We will argue that which was lost is found. Contemporary sources for Lindsay's poem exist. Identifying those sources not only helps to illuminate the author's intent, but explains why he would have felt secure in what he had to say.

Lindsay only gradually came to understand the efficacy of his own rhetoric, and "The Congo" was one of the first of his poems to illustrate how effective his poetry could be. Lindsay, as he did in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, placed his most important message at the end of his text: "The Hope of their Religion." And he was both surprised and angered to find his audience generally ignored that section in favor of his description of black cannibals, drunkenness, and revelry. He acknowledged as much in a letter to Harriet Moody, his friend and the editor of *Poetry Magazine,* dated December 22, 1922:

> To meet such tiny flocks of the elect I pay the price of reciting these two poems I abhor—Booth and the Congo, for the larger group.
>
> . . . I love the human race, but I hope to teach them to regard me as a mediator, not as a jazzer.
>
> The whole jazzy notion of my work is based on the eagerness of my first year of reciting after I had faced contempt for so long. . . .[115]

Lindsay came as close in this extract as he ever came to explaining the origin and intent behind "The Congo." Even when "The Congo" vaulted him to national and international recognition he was still unhappy with its popular interpretation.

"The Congo" depicted blacks stereotypically. In the poem, they were silly, childish, uncivilized, lazy, superstitious drunks, born of a primitive vicious people. There were two caveats to this portrayal. Lindsay also cited the failure of white models of

[115] In the previous paragraph, Lindsay had defined "the Elect" as "Professors of English, and their wives. . . . I would say offhand the finest set of people in the Anglo Saxon world. . ." (Chenetier 259). Marc Chenetier, *Letters of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: Burt Franklin & Company, 1979), 259-60.

civilization to shoulder responsibility in guiding a backward people to the light. And Lindsay cited his "hope [for] their religion" in helping blacks overcome the hurdles to equality.[116] However, even though Lindsay did offer both hope and mitigating circumstances, the weight of the argument came down on the side of depicting blacks as uncivilized and inadequate, now, with a future hope that the problem might eventually be overcome. Lindsay was probably sincere in his hope for the eventual social inclusion of blacks. But this was never the primary focus of his larger work. The source material "The Congo" drew on more properly predicted the trajectory his argument would take.

"The Congo" drew noticeably from the work of Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Marion Cook. The very structure of the poem reflected Dunbar and Cook's musical *In Dahomey* (1902).[117] But where *In Dahomey* asserted America as the new and only possible home for the former slaves, Lindsay's "Congo" argued *Africa* as a more proper alternative. Lindsay always saw black Americans as did Booker T. Washington, as separate but equal, and Africa was a logical metaphor for "separate."

No one seems to have noticed the similarity between "The Congo" and *In Dahomey*. Why was that? For one thing, early twentieth-century American literature generally *was* divided into white and black spheres. But one could also argue familiarity with the works, requiring no commentary. Those who did see the connection assumed everyone would. Those who didn't knew no better. Also, there were apt to be uncomfortable questions asked of white commentators who demonstrated an undue familiarity with black popular culture. There were apt to be uncomfortable questions

[116] Vachel Lindsay, *Collected Poems* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), 182.
[117] See Thomas L. Riis, Editor. *The Music and Scripts of In Dahomey* (Madison: A-R Editions, Inc., 1996).

asked of Lindsay and uncomfortable associations made. One such association was Lindsay's debt to jazz, an easy leap to make when confronted with the poet's unorthodox style, rhythm, and subject matter. Lindsay denied a fascination with jazz for most of his professional life, but the necessity for the denials spoke to the persistence of the claims following along behind "The Congo's" fame. Lindsay was often introduced as a jazz poet, because of the cadence and topics of his rhyme, but Lindsay shunned the racial and moral connotations of jazz at every opportunity. In the introduction to his *Collected Poetry*, he writes, "I have tried to fight off all jazz" (xxv). Lindsay's letter to Katherine Lee Bates, dated October 28, 1924, reads:

> I used the word [jazz] once or twice when it meant spice. *But just after that* the world, the whole world went jazz-mad—a thing none of us could have prophesied and I have been worn to my soul welcomed to a thousand towns where I have had to explain to thousands I was *not* a Jazz artist—and the saxophone, which I hate—was read into everything I ever did (Chenetier 331)

Lindsay was very sensitive about his place in the poetic canon. Inconvenient questions concerning the origins of "The Congo" were not welcome. Unsurprisingly, Lindsay's accounts of the poem's creation varied with the audience. And the poet was always careful to avoid the Dunbar and Cook connection. If nobody suspected, then so much the better. Denial itself might well have drawn unnecessary attention. Lindsay sought to hide the source while riding the content, reigning in the jazz sax solos,

elaborating on the philosophy. And that's what we see in "The Congo," the work of Paul Dunbar, Marion Cook, and W. E. B. Du Bois exaggerated and taken out of context.

There were three sets of documents published in W. E. B. Du Bois's journal *The Crisis* between November 1914 and January 1917 which related to Lindsay: his short story, entitled "The Golden-Faced People," W. E. B. Du Bois's short critique of Lindsay's poem, "The Booker Washington Trilogy," and an exchange of letters between Lindsay and Joel Spingarn, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NAACP, Spingarn critiquing "The Congo" and Lindsay's perspective on race generally. All the material in *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* can be seen to address race and ethnicity. Lindsay also published other texts within this time frame, most notably *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915).

In his letter to *The Crisis* in May 1915, published under the title "A Poem on the Negro," Lindsay discussed the sources he used in creating "The Congo:"

> Then I had in my list [research and sources for his poem "The Congo"] some of the things *Uncle Tom's Cabin* meant, and the emancipation proclamation. I had in mind the affair of Coatsville, Pa., and the other burnings alive of Negroes, some of them guilty Negroes, many of them innocent. I put in my list the songs of Stephen Collins Foster. I put in the list my memories of *The Souls of Black Folk*, that beautiful tragic book by the black leader W. E. B. Du Bois. I might add, for the other side of the picture, that I had seen on Eleventh Avenue, New York, north from Fifty-

> ninth Street, many saloons where the Negroes seemed eight feet high and the degraded white men who waited upon them about four feet high, and they all drank liquor served from the bar, but from barrels piled high against the wall in gloomy grandeur. Going through a score of these barrel-houses in one evening, on behalf of a certain religious institution, I accumulated a jungle impression that remains with me yet, and shall remain for many a day to come [sic].[118]

It's difficult to know from the text if the "degraded white men" were so limited because they worked in a saloon or because they waited on "Negroes." It was probably a combination of the two. However, even if poorly worded and innocently intended, remembering that Lindsay was no scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois would probably have been incensed by the statement. One should also note Lindsay's temperance involvement, and his seeming acquiesce to burning black people alive, *if* they were guilty (Lindsay never repudiated lynching; his only argument was against lynching the innocent.). And the "jungle impression" associated with both blacks and the saloon stands out boldly.[119] *The Crisis* was one of the first journals to publish Lindsay's work, running his short story "The Golden Faced People" in 1914. One can only imagine Du Bois's reaction to

[118] "A Poem on the Negro," *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* (May, 1915): 18-19.
[119] Lindsay's "jungle impression" was echoed by more historically impressive members of the literati as well. Henry James, in *The American Scene* (1907), wrote: "I was waiting, in a cab, at the railway-station. . . while a group of tatterdemalion darkies lounged and sunned themselves within range. To take in with any attention two or three of these figures had surely been to feel one's self introduced at a bound to the formidable question, which rose suddenly like some beast that had sprung from the jungle. . . . They represented the Southern black as we knew him not. . ." (360-61). Henry James, *The American Scene* (New York: Harpers, 1907), 360-61.

Lindsay's "jungle impressions." A sense of "betrayal" might not be too strong a depiction.

In the letter, Lindsay also made reference to one of the fathers of blackface minstrelsy, Stephen Collins Foster. Robert Toll writes of Stephen Foster:

> His songs enjoyed greater popularity than those of any other minstrel songwriter. . . . Everything Foster wrote was romantic, sentimental, and emotionally moving. On the plantation, he found warm, happy images of family and home, free from all problems. His fictional slaves, though he shunned that word, were happy and carefree, contented old men or exiles longing to return. . . . Besides giving whites ludicrous caricatures of blacks, minstrelsy, through songs like Foster's, also created an idealized world that had all the virtues that Northern society seemed to lack.[120]

A student of theatre, Benjamin Fisler personified Stephen Foster as trying "to encourage more dignified portraits of African Americans in song, by writing more sentimental, less degrading pieces.[121] Though born in the North, the Foster depicted here was a man of the same ilk that Lindsay had suggested to D. W. Griffith as "Southern men of Mr. Griffith's class" to be emulated in "future Southern scenarios."[122] Foster depicted a gentle, loving, and nostalgic South.

---

[120] Robert C. Toll, *Blacking up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 37.
[121] Benjamin Daniel Fisler, "The Phenomenology of Racialism: Blackface Puppetry in American Theatre, 1872-1939." Diss. University of Maryland, 2005, 44-45.
[122] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 48.

In the published letter, Lindsay also revealed that in creating "The Congo" he drew from "Stanley's 'Darkest Africa,'" ". . . the Dahomey Amazons of the Chicago [World's] Fair," and two songs by Bert Williams and George Walker, "In My Castle on the River Nile" and "My Zulu Babe." Lindsay also credited Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*, his own interviews with "ten colored preachers," and "endless [interviews with] prominent citizens among the whites. Their answers to the same questions were in startling contrast to the first compilation [the perspective of the colored preachers]." The overall impetus of the poem was credited to the "Springfield anti-Negro riots" of 1908 ("Poem on the Negro" 18-19).[123] Lindsay told us everything we need to know in order to understand the genesis and context of his poem, "The Congo," generally. One has to decipher the sources in order to understand what they mean.

Among his other sources, Lindsay said he drew the basis of the poem from a series of recorded songs by Williams and Walker. If you take that hint one step further, you find the songs themselves were drawn from *In Dahomey*, a musical written largely by Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Will Marion Cook at the turn of the century, but by 1914,

[123] The Springfield race riots of 1908 were the immediate cause for the creation of the NAACP. The first organizational meeting of the NAACP was held in Springfield, Illinois, both in recognition of the contributions Abraham Lincoln had made to racial equality and as a rebuke to the riots and rioters. A depiction of the riot's cause could have come straight from Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*. A young white woman made a false accusation of rape, which she later recanted. And the community rose up and lynched several black men (almost at random) in retribution. Stanley's *Darkest Africa* was the story of Emir Pasha's rescue, 1889, Stanley's trek beginning at the mouth of the Congo and ending in Uganda, this adventure occurring long after the "Livingston I presume" expedition. Lindsay's reference in "The Congo" to "the mountains of the moon" was contemporary usage, referring to Stanley's search for the source of the Nile. The larger context to the poem was missionary activity in the Congo. The idea of opening the interior of Africa, at least in popular perception, was the spread Christianity to every corner of every continent.

when Lindsay first publicly recited "The Congo," the knowledge of the songs' connection to *In Dahomey* had, no doubt, become specialized and archaic knowledge. The songs could still be referenced as individual recordings, single cylinders, but not necessarily as parts of a larger work.

In a sense Lindsay did reveal the source of his inspiration, but you have to read his text carefully, within the context of his day, to understand what was being said. Lindsay wrote:

> I had seen the dances of the Dahomey Amazons at the Chicago fair when I was a boy. I wanted to reiterate the word Congo, and get some Dahomey into it. Among my notes were songs used by Williams and Walker before Walker died. Do you remember 'In my castle on the River Nile I'm going to live in elegant style, baboon butler to guard the door, diamond carpet on the floor?' Then there was a song 'My Zulu Babe,' where Williams as the buck and Walker as the lady used to appear in black tights and brief ostrich feathered skirts and go prancing in and out of the stage jungle in a mock wooing. They magically conveyed the voodoo power of Africa. The whole white audience turned into jungle savages and yelled with a sort of gorilla delight [sic] ("A Poem on the Negro" 18).

As is very clear in the text, Lindsay witnessed these performances. He described the Williams and Walker performance. These weren't *just* recordings. "My Castle on the Nile" was one of the signature songs of *In Dahomey*. The surviving records are incomplete, but "My Zulu Babe" could also have been performed as a part of *In*

Dahomey.[124] Lindsay also mentioned the "stage[d] jungle," which was very much a part of *In Dahomey*, the jungle recreated on stage. *In Dahomey* was a unique musical: "Its opening marked the historic arrival of a full-length black musical *inside* rather than on the rooftop of a Broadway venue" [emphasis in original] (Carter 57). The musical was also performed for the benefit of King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace on June 23, 1903 (Carter 65-66). *In Dahomey* was an event. It was seen as the coming of age of black theatre. Given the suggestive nature of Lindsay's description, Lindsay probably attended the play.

Lindsay wrote, "I wanted to reiterate the word Congo, and get some Dahomey into it" ("A Poem on the Negro" 18). The reference could be read as the Dahomey exhibit of the Chicago World's Fair, as the name of an African colony, as the title of a musical or play, or (as we will come to see) a fundamental encapsulation of black folk, depending on one's interpretation of Lindsay's text.[125] Lindsay did not make the Dahomey statement explicit; it stands as an indeterminate glyph; one has to bring the

[124] "My Dahomey Queen" is almost the same song as "My Zulu Babe," and the "Queen" *is* documented as a part of the musical. There is also both a reference and citation in *Swing Along: The Musical Life of Will Marion Cook* (2008) to "My Zulu Babe," suggesting the song was a part of *In Dahomey*, but the reference is somewhat ambiguous. See Marva Griffin Carter, *Swing Along: The Musical Life of Will Marion Cook* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58.

[125] The rendering of the poem's origin as seen in Rachel Blau DuPlessis's "Hoo, Hoo, Hoo," in *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934* (2001), and Walter C. Daniel's "Vachel Lindsay, W. E. B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*", published in *The Crisis* (August 1979), are typical of the kinds of analysis to be found on the topic. Both cite Lindsay's racism, neither cite Dunbar and Cook's *In Dahomey*, though DuPlessis does tie Lindsay to blackface minstrelsy (which is unusual, though accurate) and ponders Lindsay's seemingly endless attempts to reference the genesis of "The Congo" to famous white authors. Lindsay's poem drew heavily from *In Dahomey*, though there is a significant departure from the musical that will be addressed in due course. However, if one were to label Lindsay "racist" for "The Congo," it would seem difficult to avoid doing much the same for Dunbar and Cook's *In Dahomey*. Walter C. Daniel, "Vachel Lindsay, W. E. B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*," *The Crisis* (August, 1979: 291-93. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Hoo, Hoo, Hoo." *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

knowledge of *In Dahomey* as a musical encapsulating many songs, acts, and variations, *to* the text, in order to make sense of the statement.

In Dahomey was a musical by Dunbar and Cook, performed in Chicago, New York and London between 1902 and 1905, but it was both more and less than this (Thomas Riis xv). To say it was a musical is to perhaps ascribe more coherence and status to the performance than it might deserve. It could also be described as a variety show. Thomas Riis, in *The Music and Scripts of In Dahomey* (1996), reports that the performances and scripts were variable, depending on the night, the mood and caprice of the performers, and that it was a work in progress, evolving over time as it was performed; Riis described the musical as a kind of "minstrel show," not really so much a play and only technically a musical (xxvix, xxxvi).[126] There *was* a storyline to *In Dahomey*, but it was tenuous; the performance was more a forum to showcase the individual talents of the actors and writers than a formal set-piece drama or comedy. Insofar as *In Dahomey* serves as the starting point *and* the background of "The Congo," the poem can't really be understood without reference to the musical. Lindsay's poem served as a rebuttal to the message inherent in the musical. And this could be seen as one of the explanations for the enormous popularity of "The Congo."

[126] Many were to critique Dunbar for helping to portray blacks in a demeaning light in his adaptation of minstrelsy and dialect. Kevin Gaines, in *Uplifting the Race* (1996), wrote: ". . . [Alexander] Crummell held the black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar in high regard, despite the fact that Dunbar was implicated by the commodification of blackness in mass culture industries of literature and musical comedy." "James Weldon Johnson, who greatly admired Dunbar, recalled that beneath the latter's politeness dwelled a 'bitter sarcasm,' adding that Dunbar felt aesthetically limited by incessant demand for his dialect poetry. Dunbar's reputation was the captive of whites' fixed image of blackness and minstrelsy, a view that pursued him to the grave." Bert Williams and George Walker were among the original (American) cast of Africans in the Dahomey exhibit of the Chicago World's Fair (Thomas Riis xix). Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 180-82.

In Dahomey opened as a traditional minstrel show with a patent medicine salesman hawking his wares. Dr. Straight, the medicine man, sold mostly hair straighteners and skin bleach to the gathered black audience on stage. Most of the play's characters were grifters on the make. The Lightfoot family, Moses, Cicero, and Mrs. Lightfoot, were the organizers of a colonization project, planning to settle a black American colony in Dahomey. The name Moses, of course, carries the biblical connotation of Exodus and the Promised Land, and that was *the* major analogy being made. The black (fallible) Moses stood in ironic contrast to the biblical Moses. Dunbar and Cook's Moses communicated he was going to Dahomey to open franchises for a few saloons. And this was a part of the grifter symbolism that abounded in the work; hard liquor and beer proliferate as symbols in the play, and much of the humor revolved around drunkenness. Colonization itself was a satiric symbol; Moses tells us in Act I that if the Dahomey natives resist his gift of "civilization" he'll do to them as "Uncle Sam did with the Indians" (Thomas Riis l). Neither colonization nor civilization were seen as benign in the musical.

On Friday the thirteenth, Cicero lost a magic silver box, the box engraved with a cat. The retrieval of the box, in return for a five hundred dollar reward, drove much of the action. Black magic was an ongoing motif, the propensity for, or fear of, magic being a characteristic shared by many of the main characters. So, the play began by defining the beliefs and motivations of blacks in opposition to whites, superstition as opposed to Christianity. The humor was directed against all who would challenge the established social order, all of them black; however, the implication of the story line was that these

were unusually inept and contemptible challengers. The idea of exaggeration as a form of humor was at play here. Only an outsider would have ever seen these as representative black people, just as only outsiders would have ever seen blackface minstrels as representative of black culture. A recolonization effort by ethically questionable black colonizers carried an implicit comparison to missionary activities of the day. And both Moses and Cicero expressed doubts about the colonization venture from the beginning.

The characters were shady, though not necessarily evil or mean spirited. They were small time incompetent hoodlums. Shylock was introduced to us in Act I as beating ("blowing") a big bass Salvation Army drum. He had lost all his money shooting craps, and this was the way he managed to feed himself, beating the drum for the Salvation Army, a demonstration of religious irony. Walker was the straight man, performing a series of pratfalls. The first two acts took place in the United States, Boston and Florida.

The two main characters of the musical are Shylock Homestead and Rareback Pinkerton, played by George Walker and Bert Williams. The incompetent detectives, Homestead and Pinkerton, try to track down Cicero's silver box. As always, there is a literary convention which argues names mean something. Homestead was the site of the 1892 steel strike, and the subsequent violent Pinkerton assault. So, the storyline is the conflict between the two major characters. Shylock, of course, was Shakespeare's reprehensible Jew, but this could also be read as a statement on racial conflict in a play devoted to race.

The first two acts revolved around the organization of a colonization mission to Dahomey that Homestead and Pinkerton got involved with, in search of the silver box.

Though the first two acts carried a semblance of continuity, Act III was truncated. The plot lines were brought to a close abruptly at the end of the play, with little attempt to communicate a believable or realistic series of events. Two years have past since the end of Act II. The colonists have moved to Dahomey where they have alienated the natives, and are on the verge of being executed by the Dahomian King. Shylock and Rareback have bought a royal appointment as local governors, which cost them a cask of whisky, and the two detectives, by virtue of their status as governors, argued against the execution of the other colonists. Moses Lightfoot tells us at this point that he wanted to go home. All of the colonists, except for Shylock and Rareback, expressed the same desire, but they were all prisoners of the Dahomian King. As Shylock suggested would happen (before the fact), the King woke up the next morning with a cask-sized hangover, and by way of thanking the two detectives for the gift of whisky, he offered to send them as messengers to his father, who passed away decades ago, should they still be present in the kingdom thirty-six hours hence. At this point *all* the colonists agreed: "There was no place like home."

The action pursuant to the plot was fairly trite and mundane. The songs, dance and humor seem incidental to the storyline. *In Dahomey* was primarily a variety show, and much (probably most) of the Third Act was devoted to impromptu and unscripted song and dance that could vary with each performance. The songs, generally, tended to speak to that element of Shakespeare's Shylock that is least well remembered today, not the pound of flesh vindictiveness, but the idea of empathy. Equality. These were the elements communicated in the songs of *In Dahomey*. And the songs, the minstrel and

variety show atmosphere, carried the weight of the meaning: "We are not *black* folk," or "We are human beings."

The ending of the musical also carried another significant message. The writers build a plot around colonization societies, which were not unheard of in that day. In the Dunbar and Cook storyline the black promoters of the colonization society repudiated the back-to-Africa movement.[127] At the end of *In Dahomey*, the colonizers "go back home" to America (Thomas Riis lxxii). They were no longer Africans. Admittedly the American civilization they brought with them to Africa was ruthlessly flawed with self-serving exploitation and liquor, but for all the flaws inherent in the civilization they brought back to Africa, they saw themselves as enculturated, civilized Americans, a breed apart. And *as* civilized Americans, they returned home. America was their home; that was the message.

Lindsay's "Congo" was a demonstration piece. It was meant to be performed. *In Dahomey* was written in three acts. "The Congo" was written in three chapters. Chapters I and II of "The Congo" can be seen as basic restatements of the first two acts of *In Dahomey*. The musical had only an ephemeral storyline anyway, which was what Robert Toll, in *Blacking Up* (1974), suggested was the traditional format for a minstrel show, the storyline serving more to introduce the songs than carry a plot forward (34). There were two major bifurcations in *Dahomey's* storyline. One occurs at the end of Act II, where the story moves to Africa after a lapse of two years. The other occurred at the end of the

[127] As we will see, Alexander Crummell, a friend of Paul Dunbar, promoted a back-to-Africa movement.

story, in Act III. Act III was very short, three pages long in Thomas Riis's text. But the musical did not stop with the end of the action. The end of the plot formed the beginning of a free-form cakewalk, a dance or variety show. There were several scripted cakewalks in the musical.[128] Lindsay's poem "The Congo" ended with a cakewalk.

The first chapter of Lindsay's "Congo," entitled "Their Basic Savagery," opens with a symbol that resonated on several levels with Act I of *In Dahomey*. "Fat black bucks in a back barrel room" introduced the audience to a group of black drunks, probably in a saloon. Robert Toll wrote that blackface minstrelsy after the Civil War addressed topics of national concern, the reasons for "social and moral decay" (160-61):

> Minstrels were very seriously disturbed by what seemed a shocking deterioration of moral values in the city. But they attacked only symptoms, not causes. People no longer attended churches, they lamented. . . . And when the city dwellers did go, minstrels complained, 'churches built for prayer are where people show off their fashions.' Everywhere they looked they saw conventional morality being ignored and families disintegrating (181-82).

Toll wrote that the "stump speaker" became a consistent motif of blackface minstrelsy (56). *In Dahomey's* first act began with a traveling salesman selling hair straightener and skin bleach. And Lindsay's entire poem can be seen as an extended stump oration. One of Lindsay's lifelong themes was temperance, and he began his poetic oration castigating black drunks. In his letter to *The Crisis* of 1915, Lindsay described his temperance work

[128] Dunbar and Cook also wrote *Clorindy; Or, The Origin of the Cakewalk* (1898). And, as the title suggests, the cakewalk was central to that musical as well.

as dealing with black drunks ("A Poem on the Negro" 19). Lindsay applied the traditional critiques to be found in minstrelsy. And he saw these critiques as the legitimate product of his "research" into the "Study of The Negro Race." Lindsay did not see blackface minstrelsy as ludicrous. He saw blackface minstrelsy as an ideal: happy, contented blacks in a communal, family environment.

In Lindsay's "Congo" blacks were drunk and clearly out of control:

> Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
>
> Pounded on the table,
>
> Beat an empty barel with the handle of a broom,
>
> Hard as they were able,
>
> Boom, boom, BOOM,

In the first act, second page, of *In Dahomey* the audience was introduced to the idea of saloon franchises for Dahomey to be sold by black American colonists. In the first act, fourth page, Shylock Homestead entered stage left beating a Salvation Army big bass drum: Boom, boom, boom (Thomas Riis lii). The drum in both works was a symbolic representation of morality and religion generally, and The Salvation Army specifically. In the drum, Lindsay introduced a symbolic tie to the musical, Christianity, the Salvation Army, the prevailing tactics of proselytization, and his ultimate hope for the Negro. However, the bass drum also served to bridge past savagery with present Christianity. In Chapter I of "The Congo" Lindsay wrote:

> Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
>
> And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.

And “Blood” screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,

“Blood” screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,

. . . Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom. . . (*Collected Poems* 179).

In Chapter III, the chapter devoted to “The Hope of Their Religion,” he wrote:

And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,

And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,

And they all repented, a thousand strong

From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong

And slammed with their hymn books till they shook the room

With “glory, glory, glory,”

And “Boom, boom, Boom” (183).

The sense of the poem was that savagery was built into blacks, now, and then, communicated by the omnipresent drums, and only mitigated by Christianity. At the turn of the twentieth century, savagery and violence were seen to preclude a people’s participation in democracy. A race’s suitability for democratic government was a key determinant in Lindsay’s day for inclusion in the social fabric.[129] And though he did not mention democracy in “The Congo,” we have seen that for Carlyle democracy was an intermediate step towards the new world order. Democracy and religion could be seen as an underlying premise to any Carlylian interpretation.

[129] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 180-81.

As a symbol, the Salvation Army tied the jungles and savagery of Africa to the concrete jungles of London and New York, home to the poor and dissolute of the "civilized" world, the tenement dwellers who Lindsay referred to as cavemen in *Art of the Moving Picture*. Matthew Jacobson wrote that Africa served as a "living metaphor. . . whose savages and cannibals at once resisted and defined the West's vaunted 'civilization'" (*Barbarian Virtues* 117). The title of Henry Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* (1890), the text Lindsay cited as one of his sources for "The Congo," paralleled the title of General William Booth's *In Darkest England* (1890). In *Darkest England*, "Booth compared heathens abroad with the poor in England. Readers would have understood that many of the poor, at least in London, were indeed heathen—of Jewish and Catholic origin."[130]

Diane Winston, in *Red Hot and Righteous* (1999), a history of the Salvation Army, reported that the jungle image was a comparison, referring not only to the heathen and the poor, but to the very tactics of the Salvation Army:

> Sometimes, while the speaking and praying was going on, the women would keep up a monotonous and gentle thumping and jingling of their

[130] Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army. From the same passage, Booth goes on to write, "The Equatorial Forest traversed by Stanley resembles the Darkest England of which I have to speak, alike in its vast extent—both stretch, in Stanley's phrase, 'as far as from Plymouth to Peterhead'; its monotonous darkness, its malaria and its gloom, its dwarfish de-humanized inhabitants, the slavery to which they are subjected, their privations and their misery" (Winston 60). Note here the reference from Lindsay's May, 1915 letter to *The Crisis*: ". . . the degraded white men who waited upon them [Blacks in the saloon] about four feet high. . ." ("A Poem on the Negro" 19). Lindsay's white men in this passage are degraded by pushing drink, and that is a part of the statement Booth is making, the degradation of the "civilized" poor. The Salvation Army members were prohibited from using alcohol: "Soldiers and officers were required to be teetotalers, and William Booth had ended the practice of Communion, citing as one reason that newly converted drunks might be tempted by wine" (Winston 134). In the titles of Stanley's and Booth's texts we see a Salvation Army example of Lindsay's technique, taking an idea and turning it to another purpose. Diane Winston, *Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 60.

> tambourines. It was. . . like the fetish worship which those same negroes in their native African forests, would have performed before some hideous idol, amid the beating of tom-toms and the groans of human sacrifice (Winston 41).

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* communicated the existence of the same civilized savage found in Booth's *Darkest England*. On the one hand Conrad wrote of the savage England the Romans encountered when they first crossed the Channel.[131] On the other hand, Kurtz, the missionary and company manager, represented little more than the savage and grasping hand of civilization. Conrad's protagonist Marlow said: "The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much" (21). Africa as represented by the jungle was a dual image referring to the red-in-tooth-and-claw, dog-eat-dog world of the savage and the civilized, both then and now, there and here. Black and white, heathens all, were ensconced in the metaphor of the jungle.

The concept of savagery itself became a linear measure of progress across time: "In their ruthless development, white savages had left black savages far behind; black savages now represented a missing link in the evolutionary chain extending backward in time. . . . [P]resent day savages represented living fossils of Stone Age mentalities and

[131] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: Complete Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives.* Ross C. Murfin, Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 20-21.

lifeways" (Jacobson *Barbarian Virtues* 140-41).[132] But savagery was also seen as an equivocal virtue, necessary for the propagation of "civilization." Matthew Jacobson quotes Theodore Roosevelt as writing: "Unless we keep the barbarian virtues, gaining the civilized ones will be of little avail" (*Barbarian Virtues* 265). Lindsay based his "Congo" on the evolutionary distance separating civilization from savagery. The poem itself is a kind of history, a "Study of the Negro Race" that moves from a discussion of "Their Basic Savagery" to the "Hope of Their Religion," the title of the poem, and the titles of Chapter I and Chapter III.

The difference between Lindsay and someone like Madison Grant, who wrote *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), was that Lindsay did not forgive *white* savagery. Lindsay castigated Leopold II in his poem for sacking the Congo: "Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost,/ Burning in Hell for his hand maimed host" (*Collected Poems* 180). But as Jacobson pointed out, blacks had already been defined as savage, regardless of their locale. Lindsay echoed that definition in the title of the first chapter of his poem: "Their Basic Savagery." He saw white savagery as more of an aberration than the inborn savagery of blacks. To put it another way, he held whites to a higher standard.

So, seeing *Dahomey's* Shylock "blowing" a big bass drum for the Salvation Army after having lost six months wages in a crap game would not have surprised Lindsay. He would have expected that behavior. And the drum itself was a symbol that would have

[132] This same sense of the past in the present can be seen in Joseph Conrad's account of Africa, from *Heart of Darkness* (1899): "'Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings.' . . . We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. . . . The prehistoric man [native African] was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell" (49-51)?

resonated with the audiences of both *Dahomey* and "The Congo." The Salvation Army was renowned for drawing on popular culture, minstrelsy, and sensationalism, to attract an audience in order to make a presentation:

> William Booth taught that all publicity was good publicity. The goal, he wrote, was to ATTRACT ATTENTION. . . . [I]n its early years the Army's strength was its ability to be a part of street life; its success was predicated on attracting crowds who confused it with a circus, a variety show, or minstrelsy (Winston 17).

Lindsay's use of drums drew from contemporary examples, expropriating popular culture with the intent of turning it to another purpose. With that in mind, it is not surprising Lindsay would turn the work of Dunbar and Cook to something they did not intend.

For Lindsay the drums represented the inherent savagery of blacks. For Shylock the drum represented desperation, the extent to which he had fallen, but neither salvation nor resurrection. Lindsay intended to infuse meaning into a symbol. He did not intend to accept another's unmodified values. Lindsay used the big bass drum as a religious metaphor that would have been understood as a religious symbol in his own time. But that was far from the perspective of Susan Gubar, a literary historian who wrote: "What distinguished the poetry of Boomlay Boom in the twentieth century is its nonsensical hilarity, its anarchic incomprehensibility."[133] There was little of the nonsensical to it. Lindsay used the same musical image found in *Dahomey* in his poem "The Congo." And he used the same expropriating style advocated by General William Booth and The

[133] Susan Gubar, *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture*. Arnold Rampersad and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 143.

Salvation Army. He demonstrated an articulated philosophy. And Lindsay lived in the time when the Salvation Army was a force to be reckoned with.

The philosophy Lindsay articulated in *The Art of the Moving Picture* can be seen as an elaboration on the tactics and philosophy of the Salvation Army.[134] The Salvation Army attempted to sacralize the secular to a postmillennial end. It was an attempt to demonstrate the spiritual inherent in the mundane. "Hoping to compete with secular amusements, the Army used popular music, lively pageantry, and dramatic testimonies to express themes of love, service, and salvation" (Winston 13). Far from being creative or original, Lindsay was just part of the spirit of the age. He was a craftsman, not a creator. Indeed, if you go back to his May 1915 letter to *The Crisis*, Lindsay wrote of Williams's and Walker's performance: "They magically conveyed the voodoo power of Africa. The whole white audience turned into jungle savages and yelled with a sort of gorilla delight" ("A Poem on the Negro" 18). The statement can be seen as a paraphrase from "On Emancipation Day," one of the songs written by Dunbar and Cook for *In Dahomey*: "When dey hear dem rag-time tunes White fo'ks try to pass fo' coons On Emancipation day" (Thomas Riis 119).[135] The difference, of course, is that Lindsay wrote of the degraded. He wrote of up-lift, within the context of the Salvation Army, which was far from Dunbar and Cook's intent. Dunbar and Cook celebrated the right to life, to equality,

[134] In a version of the origin of "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," Lindsay wrote: "In my poem I merely turned into rhyme as well as I could, word for word, General Booth's own account of his life, and the telegraph dispatches of his death after going blind. . ." (*Collected Poems* 22).
[135] Lindsay seems to have witnessed the play, though he may have drawn from the scripts and recordings. He would have been in New York at the same time the musical was being performed.

to emancipation, while Lindsay communicated the idea that there was more work to be done.

Societies can change, but they do so grudgingly. Stealing and turning images to another end might be very poetic, but it would seem a poor vehicle with which to engineer social change. Definitions are sticky. Those "turned" images would still carry the old meanings, regardless of how they were reconstructed. That would seem to be the sense of Peter Berger's *Social Construction of Reality* (1967).[136] Berger consistently argued both the individual and real danger inherent in contesting the social reality (58-59). And that danger helps explain Lindsay's ambiguity, the attempt to "turn" an image in order to redefine the underlying reality, rather than presenting an argument for open discussion.

Dunbar and Cook cast only the *uncivilized* as savage. Lindsay also cast blacks as savage. Lindsay's first chapter addressed drunkenness, war (cannibalism), theft, and superstition as the basic traits of blacks, within the mitigating context of a ruthless Belgium king. The basic nature of black Africans was assumed to be violence and savagery, but for all this violence and affinity for war the black natives were unable to rid themselves of Leopold II, who saw to the destruction of perhaps more than ten million natives over a thirty year-period.[137] There was no intimation in the poem that the violence, war, or savagery was *caused* by Leopold, and any sense of justice to be found

[136] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967).
[137] The idea of the enslaved unable to free themselves from their oppressors is an important theme that Lindsay developed in "The Golden-Faced People," a short story published in *The Crisis* in November 1914. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 233.

was left to the afterlife: “Listen to the yell of Leopold’s Ghost/burning in hell for his hand maimed host” (*Collected Poems* 180).

Lindsay’s second chapter began with a reference to “crap-shooters,” the same theme seen in Act I of *In Dahomey*, gambling, dancing, a lack of respect for police authority, all to the refrain of the Salvation Army’s big brass drum. Lindsay’s first stanza of the second chapter, portrayed “The Congo” as a “minstrel river” flowing beside an “ebony palace” made of “gold and ivory and elephant-bone,” with a “baboon butler in the agate door,” which is essentially the sense one gets from the Williams and Walker song “My Castle on the Nile,” one of the songs from *In Dahomey* (Lindsay *Collected Poems* 181): “I am gwinter live in elegant style Inlaid diamonds on de flo a Baboon butler at my do’” (Thomas Riis 96-97).

Lindsay’s second chapter moved from a description of black frivolity and debasement, presumably in America, gambling, and dancing, to a depiction of the Congo taken from *In Dahomey*, to a cake walk, “The cake-walk royalty then began/To walk for a cake as tall as a man” (*Collected Poems* 182). The “cake as tall as a man” reference was echoed in an eyewitness depiction of the Dunbar and Cook musical, referring to a “huge cake over six feet in height, and illuminated by one hundred electric lights” (Carter 66). Much like his first chapter, Lindsay’s second chapter can be seen as a synopsis of *In Dahomey*.

Lindsay took his first two chapters as the basis of his argument and projected a solution in his third chapter: “The Hope of Their Religion.” He took “a good old negro,” a staple of minstrelsy, and presented a Christian revival, to the repeated refrain of the

Salvation Army's "Boom, boom, Boom" (Toll 36, 78, Lindsay *Collected Poems* 183). Christianity will end their savagery. The Christian missions in the Congo will work a miracle and create or revive the "negro nation:" "Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men" (*Collected Poems* 184).[138] Repeatedly in the third chapter, Lindsay gave directions as to how the poem was to be recited: "[Sung to the tune of 'Hark, ten thousand harps and voices.']" (*Collected Poems* 183). The song carried a Christian message. Though Lindsay was often criticized for stage directing his poetry, he was using a staple Salvation Army technique, turning a tune or message to a religious end (Winston 18). Lindsay didn't conceptualize the idea of turning the secular to the sacred himself, but he used it to turn what he considered to be a profane or secular concept to Christianity, which was also a standard Salvation Army tactic (Winston 13).

Lindsay took a vehicle of popular culture, *In Dahomey*, and tried to give it a Protestant Christian trajectory, sacralizing the secular. In the process, Lindsay reworked Dahomey's abortive recolonization theme into a more conventional missionary storyline. Lindsay's dedication of the poem ("The Congo") to Ray Eldred, the African missionary protagonist of *A Master Builder on the Congo* [1916], was a statement of intent. *A Master Builder on the Congo* was a "party line" Protestant depiction of the Congo as a fruitful arena for missionary work. In the text, Catholics were derided as being

[138] In the last chapter of "The Congo" there was an unusual implication to the text for Lindsay. Lindsay writes: "A good old negro in the slums of the town/ Preached at a sister for her velvet gown./ Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,/ His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days" (*Collected Poems* 182). "Velvet gown," "low-down ways," "prowling," these could be taken as references to black sexuality, which in conjunction with "sneak-thief" would tie Lindsay's references to the major theme of Eric Lott's blackface minstrelsy in *Love & Theft* (1993). Sexuality on any level was an unusual reference for Lindsay to make. He almost always avoided the topic. Oblique as the reference remains, it was tied to black; certainly not white.

untrustworthy and standing against temperance; often the implication of the text was that Catholic priests were violent, drunken louts.[139] With a few exceptions, Lindsay was almost always tolerant of other religions, but that didn't mean he saw all religions as equal. He was Protestant, and he tended to interpret other religions through Protestant eyes. In dedicating the poem to a Protestant missionary who had died in Africa, Lindsay implied an equality of race in religion. But it was fairly clear in the text that Christianity did not mean either equality or justice in this life. That possibility was left to the next. In Lindsay's "Congo," Leopold's punishment will be left to the demons: "Cutting his hands off, down in Hell" (*Collected Poems* 180). And in *A Master Builder of the Congo* author Andrew Henesey suggested there "would be no profit now to stir up old bitternesses" in discussing how Leopold exploited the natives and dashed the hopes of creating a "Negro" free state (99). On the other hand Henesey found it continually appropriate to discuss the cannibalism of the black natives, and their multiple deficiencies:

> And the people [of the Congo] themselves—the following pages tell much of them. Suffice at the beginning to say that they were half-naked savages, among whom polygamy and slavery were universal, their minds fettered by superstition and its ensuing fear. Among them war was the

[139] Andrew Henesey, author of *A Master Builder on the Congo*, wrote, "In addition to the vice and barbarism of these people, the progress of the Gospel is rendered still more difficult by the Catholics who add their charms to those already used by the natives." ". . . I noticed several of the Catholics drinking along with the rest [of the men of the village] and asked them about it, and they frankly said they were not forbidden to drink and do several other things that we could not tolerate" (74). ". . . [W]hile in part of the villages their minds have not been poisoned by the nefarious teaching of the Catholics" (75). Many more examples could have been drawn from the text. Andrew F. Henesey, *A Master Builder on the Congo: A Memorial to the Service and Devotion of Robert Ray Elred and Lillian Byers Elred* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916), 74-75.

> normal state of affairs, and cannibalism not uncommon. The spiritual problem was very obvious (80).

Lindsay's "Study of the Negro Race" relied on Henesey's material and the perspective of blacks as savages.

Returning blacks to Africa was an ongoing theme at the turn of the twentieth century. That same theme can be seen implicitly in "The Congo" and explicitly in *Dahomey*. In Lindsay's lifetime the Congo was repeatedly volunteered as a re-colonization site, an idea supported by Leopold II (Hochschild 77-80). The idea, to be found in Dunbar and Cook, that the black natives of Dahomey could be treated as "Uncle Sam did with the Indians" was a comparison explicitly made by King Leopold's agents in Washington (Riis l, Hochschild 78). *In Dahomey* as well as "The Congo" would seem to have been built from an historical base. The real difference between Lindsay's poem and the musical was that the blacks of the poem remained (or seemingly belonged) in Africa; whereas, in Dunbar and Cook's rendition, the black Americans returned "home" to America, embracing "the man on the make" sense of civilization, rejecting the casual violence of uncivilized savages. And this is a major distinction between the two works.

When examining the structure of the poem, its visual image on the page, Lindsay's marginal notations look like nothing so much as stage directions for a play. The marginal directions for the "Boomlay" section of "The Congo," at the end of the second chapter, read: "With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end" (*Collected Poems* 182). Lindsay was often critiqued for the marginal stage

directions he placed in some of his poems, but the uniqueness of the marginal notations themselves bespeak the dramatic origins of "The Congo."

Lindsay used this structure in "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven," "The Kallyope Yell," "The Booker Washington Trilogy," "Ghost of the Buffaloes," "Litany of the Heroes," "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed," "The Firemen's Ball," "The Santa-Fe Trail," "A Doll's Arabian Nights," and "The Last Song of Lucifer." But the marginal stage directions were far from being representative of his normal, printed, presentational style, the style he used in the vast majority of his poetry. That Lindsay would proffer this style at all, which is highly unusual in the Western poetic tradition, suggests he was approaching poetry from an entirely different direction. "The Congo" was a celebrated text, recognized by both William Butler Yeats and the public at large. There was probably no other text that Lindsay produced that carried the same name recognition. Ann Massa, one of Lindsay's biographers, reported that *The Little Review* in November 1914 regarded "The Congo" as "perilously near great poetry."[140] Though the style was present in only a smattering of Lindsay's poems, "The Congo" and its style formed the basis of Lindsay's literary reputation.

The popularity of the poem was driven by the assumptions surrounding the topic. The words, the rhythm, and philosophy carried a "jungle" connotation. And the jungle was a byword for black. Lindsay, as seen in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, attempted to turn the secular to the sacred, but that was a two-way street. The undefined and the ill-defined can be arbitrarily defined, given the definitions of the day. It would seem just as

[140] Ann Massa, *Vachel Lindsay: Fieldworker for the American Dream* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 12, 231.

easy to read "The Congo" for its reactionary content as its intended uplift, though admittedly Lindsay's liberal early twentieth-century perspective hardly seems liberal today.

Lindsay advocated social change, but gradual change. Agendas can be turned. Dunbar and Cook tried to demonstrate a rejection of blackface minstrelsy, while using many of the forms of blackface minstrelsy. They used black actors, not whites in blackface. They renounced the idea of contented darkies. Dunbar and Cook defined savages as Africans, not black Americans. But the same ideas in Lindsay's hands were turned back upon themselves.[141]

Lindsay's refusal to accept Dunbar and Cook's perspectives on the back to Africa movement promoted a more conventional perspective on that movement. From Lindsay's more Anglo perspective the idea of the back to Africa movement was to reduce racial conflict in America while providing "civilized" blacks to carry the mission of civilization and Christianity to Africa (Luker 93). The title of Lindsay's third chapter, "The Hope of Their Religion," reflected this missionary endeavor, turning the business enterprise Cook and Dunbar portrayed to the objective of uplift. In Lindsay's third chapter black Africans embraced Christianity, reformed their own society, eliminating any suggestion of cannibalism in the process. So, the implication was that Dunbar and Cook's black colonists would stay in Africa, in Lindsay's version of the story, but they

[141] Thomas Riis wrote, "Cook's insistence that the most savage of the 1890s-style coon clichés not be tolerated was maintained consistently, regardless of the lyricist or performer involved. This effort gave a stiff spine to the show that was appreciated by the players and the viewers. If the message of one or another song were sometimes covered up in the general revelry and dancing virtuosity of the moment, little was lost in over all effect" (xlv). Riis suggests that distancing itself from the assumed violence of black society of that day was the musical's contribution to race awareness. If so, Lindsay's reinterpretation would seem to have limited that contribution.

were also to go on to reshape and civilize the continent in their own image. Lindsay reshaped Dunbar and Cook's story. He did leave the blacks in Africa, but he also suggested their ability to rework their own world in a positive fashion, with little outside interference.

In *Beyond Ethnicity* (1986), Werner Sollors portrayed Vachel Lindsay's poem "Our Mother Pocahontas" as an example of Crevecoeur's "new American" melting-pot ideology. Sollors selected this example from Lindsay's poetry because of its blatant anti-European tone, and because it exemplified the idea that Americans choose their own ancestors, choosing to be seen as descendants of American Indians rather than Europeans. As we have seen, Lindsay claimed descent from American Indians. Choice, in this case, was just a matter of being honest. The idea that Sollors did not consider the possibility Lindsay *was* of mixed race reveals the assumptions behind American racial perspectives. Lindsay privileged native Americans. He privileged his own heritage. Not all races were to be so graced. Only *some* would be allowed to marry white. In "Our Mother Pocahontas," Lindsay renounced Europe, but also specifically renounced Saxon, Teuton, Norse, Slavic, and Celtic backgrounds.[142] Using race to denounce race was the logic of "race," much like Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line stood in opposition to the White Star Line; it was still a demonstration of race by way of exclusion.

This point lay at the heart of Lindsay's ongoing misunderstanding with W. E. B. Du Bois. Sollors's interpretation and conclusions concerning race illustrate the kinds of

[142] Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 79.

difficulties inherent in deciphering a hundred-year-old poem. Context, intent, assumptions, linguistic variations, meaning, belief, and emphasis of belief vary over time. Sollors's analysis illustrated a basic misunderstanding of intent, the same kind of problem Lindsay faced when dealing with Du Bois. In a different vein, Lindsay portrayed the intellectual conflict between "the United States and [the poet] Amy Lowell [as the two] barking at one another—and neither understanding the other a bit."[143] Lindsay and Du Bois, as Lindsay and the editorial board of *The Crisis*, never seem to have understood each other at all. And there were good reasons for the misunderstanding.

In his letter of November 2, 1916, to Joel Spingarn, Lindsay seemed to suggest there was a relationship between W. E. B. Du Bois and himself. The last sentence of the letter read: "Personally Mr. Du Bois has been most courteous, but I cannot understand his editorial attitude" (Massa 168-69).[144] It is unclear what form this relationship took. There was an unattributed open letter published in the August 1916 edition of *The Crisis*, entitled "The Looking Glass," which was probably written, or at least approved, by Du Bois. This letter presented a damning critique of Lindsay and his "Congo." However, besides this possibility, there are no surviving letters between Lindsay and Du Bois. There is a surviving correspondence between Lindsay and Joel Spingarn. Spingarn was the chairman of the directors of the NAACP at the time of this correspondence, and he spent the rest of his life serving that organization in one capacity or another (Chenetier *Letters of Vachel Lindsay* 134-35). It is reasonable to conclude, as does Lindsay's

[143] Marc Chenetier, "Lindsay and Imagism." *Proceedings of a Symposium on American Literature*. Marta Sienicka, Ed. Pozman, 1979.
[144] In Ann Massa's text there was a typographical error. She cited the letter as having been written in 1915.

biographer Ann Massa, that Spingarn spoke for Du Bois in this correspondence (Massa 168-69).

Lindsay's November letter to Joel Spingarn complained of a misunderstanding. Lindsay wrote: "My "Congo" and "Booker T. Washington Trilogy" have both been denounced by the colored people, for reasons that I cannot fathom" (Chenetier *Letters* 134). Spingarn wrote back on November 6, 1916. He was polite, even genteel. He pointed out that Lindsay seemed to have fallen into the trap of looking at the world from a whites only perspective. It was clear from the texts that Lindsay saw himself as writing in support of black culture through his poetry. But that was not the way Spingarn saw it.

Lindsay's printed a "Program" entitled "These Ten Lectures" for a YMCA discussion of race in 1908. The lectures held in the aftermath of the Springfield race riots of 1908 demonstrated the social stereotype at the heart of his world view. There is no record of the discussion, other than the six page "Program" itself. But we can see this as an application of his education in the Ashcan School of Art. The central idea for his first 45-minute discussion of the American Indians "Native Genius" was "War Paint and Feathers." The title of the discussion explained both why the Indians failed to survive and the reason they weren't assimilated into civilization: violence, or savagery. B. F. Riley, in *The White Man's Burden* (1910), noted that the "dominant characteristic" of the "American Indian is revenge."[145] The characteristic of violence was the same argument used against the Irish and Italian immigrants. A separate lecture by Lindsay depicted

[145] B. F. Riley, *The White Man's Burden: A Discussion of the Interracial Question with Special Reference to the Rsponsibility of the White Race to the Negro Problem.* Third Edition. (Chicago Illinois: Regan Printing House, 1910), 79.

Anglo-Saxons as having a "Native Genius for Empire." The "Program" did not show him drawing a causal connection between the "Genius for Empire" and the consequent need for "War Paint and Feathers." The implication was that the rightful place for Anglo Saxons was at the apex of civilization, but the inherent dichotomy would not necessarily suggest a melting-pot ideology.[146] The dichotomy itself could actually be seen as a depiction of a separate-but-equal mind set. The melting pot ideology Sollors suggested might rather be seen as a literary conceit.

One can see Lindsay's racial understanding in the titles of his weekly addresses. Week three of the series addressed the Irish, "Their Genius as Shown in Irish Antiquity and English History." Their "American Calling: The Police Force. The Wisdom of Mulvaney and Dooley;" Week four addressed "Why the Germans of Germany Lead the World as Scholars, Soldiers, Scientists, Musicians, Composers. . . ;" Week five: "The Negro. His Native Genius:--Sorrow Songs; Folk Lore; Oratory; Sense of the Picturesque; Minstrelsy." His "American Calling: "Professor of the Whisk Boom;" Again, we see Lindsay's perspective on blacks tied to minstrelsy, a kind of feedback loop perpetuating itself. "Professor of the Whisk Broom" hardly sounds encouraging, but it could well refer to Booker T. Washington's rise to fame. In Booker T. Washingnton's autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1901), the young Mr. Washington advanced to Hampton Institute via use of the whisk boom.[147] Note also, the reference to "Sorrow Songs," the negro spirituals; W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* said he opened

[146] Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, "These Ten Lectures." October 14, 1908. Young Men's Christian Association, 1-2.
[147] Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Authoritative Text, Contents and Composition History, Criticism* (Mineola, New York: Courier Dover Publications, 1995), 25.

each chapter with "a bar of Sorrow songs,—some echo of haunting melody from the only American music which welled up from black souls in the dark past," Lindsay showing again a parallel to the work of Du Bois (Du Bois xxxii). Week six, "The Ghetto Jews, . . . Revered and Heeded as the People with a Genius for Religion." Week seven: "The Italians. Will These People, the Greatest Painters of History do Nothing here but Sell Fruit?" Week eight, "The Poles; Liberators and Artists in Europe." Week nine, "The Chinese Genius and the Chinese Laundry;" and week ten, "The Future of Springfield. . . ." These do not necessarily seem like melting-pot ideas so much as distinctive racial traits and characteristics ("These Ten Lectures" 1-6).

In regards to Lindsay's racial attitudes, the literary historian John Chapman Ward, in "Vachel Lindsay is Lying Low (1985), argued Lindsay was "No racist, his [Lindsay's] credentials as an informed liberal with a knowledge of, and sympathy for Blacks' condition in society were impressive."[148] Ward quoted Louis Untermeyer, a literary critic in the early part of the twentieth century, as writing that Lindsay was "able to synthesize the startling fusion of race and ideas" (234).

Though Lindsay is often depicted as racist, if one were to see degrees of racism, choice and flexibility within the concept, then Lindsay could be seen as liberal for his day. He did demonstrate sympathy for people in conditions other than his own, but his sympathy was equivocal. He saw the consequences of race as both in-born *and* negotiable. Lindsay portrayed the categories of race in broad sweeping terms but reserved the right to modify those categories. That represented a demonstration of

[148] John Chapman Ward, "Vachel Lindsay is Lying Low." *College Literature*. Volume XII, Number 3 (Fall, 1985): 237.

"special pleading," a logical fallacy. But it also demonstrated a recognition of the complexity surrounding individuals, race, and culture. Small wonder Lindsay can still be seen as racist or egalitarian, depending on one's predisposition and choice of sources.

Lindsay noted that as a child "[he] nearly always had a black hired man and a black hired girl" (*Collected* 23). And in that context of white middle-class privilege, he felt he understood black people intuitively and to the core. In his "Autobiographical Forward" to his *Collected Poems*, he demonstrated his understanding of the problem of race as global, and in that sense he did *not* see race as black and white; race was a much larger, more inclusive, issue:

> [penned in 1922] And it seems to me Mason and Dixon's line runs around every country in the world, around France, Japan, Canada, or Mexico or any other sovereignty. It is the terrible line, that should be the line of love and good-will, and witty conversation, but may be the bloody line of misunderstanding (*Collected* 24).

Lindsay's words could be seen as a paraphrase or at lease a reflection of the "The Forethought" found in *The Souls of Black Folk*, where W. E. B. Du Bois noted: "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line, the relation of the darker to the lighter races in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."[149]

[149] The phrase "The Color Line" permeated the era. The phrase was to be found in Frederick Douglas' "The Color Line" (1881), as well as Thomas Dixon's *The Leopard's Spots* (1902) (145). However, though the authors use the phrase with different intent, both cases make reference to lynching as a result of cross racial sexuality. Frederick Douglass, "The Color Line," *The North American Review*. Vol. 132, Issue 293 (June 1881): 567-78. Thomas Dixon, Jr. *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden—1865-1900* (Gretna, Louisiana: A Firebird Press Book, 2001), 145. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. Introduction by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 160.

Lindsay drew from black authors, but he didn't see things the way they saw them, even when penning much the same words. The same words did not necessarily mean the same things cross culturally. Lindsay *assumed* the social hierarchy and the need for that hierarchy; an epileptic without access to status would have been hard pressed to survive let alone maintain his middle-class status. And Lindsay depended on that white middle-class status all of his life. The perspectives of Du Bois and Lindsay were different. Du Bois's "talented tenth" would have probably displaced Lindsay pretty quickly, Du Bois arguing for change, now. Lindsay argued a more Progressive, gradualist agenda; change, yes, someday, where it doesn't necessarily affect "my freedom."[150] If Lindsay did draw from *The Souls of Black Folk*, why didn't he give Du Bois authorial credit? Lindsay often credited Twain, and even Whitman, though much more sparingly, but Lindsay understood he wrote for a white audience, and Du Bois insisted on a more racially egalitarian sense of scholarship.

Lindsay and Du Bois were seemingly writing the same words while seeing different things. In 1916 *The Crisis* published a scathing critique of Lindsay's work, entitled "The Looking Glass," which would seem to signal a reappraisal of Lindsay's status as a fellow traveler. The article noted that,

> Mr. Vachel Lindsay knows two things, and two things only, about Negroes: The beautiful rhythm of their music and the ugly side of their drunkards and outcasts. From this poverty of material he tries now and then to make a contribution to Negro literature. It goes without saying that

[150] This is the philosophical sense one draws from Lindsay's autobiographical poem, "Twenty Years After: To the Right Honorable the Earl of Chesterfield." *Palms*. Guadalajara, Mexico (December 1928): 67-71.

> he only partially succeeds. His "Booker Washington Trilogy," published in *Poetry*, shows his defects as well as his genius. . . . Mr. Lindsay knows little of the Negro, and that little is dangerous.[151]

There were a series of poems that Lindsay dedicated to the Negro, written within about a five-year span of each other: "The Congo" in 1913, and the "The Booker Washington Trilogy," commemorating Washington's death (in November 1915), among others.

Lindsay published his "Booker Washington Trilogy" in the June 1916 edition of *Poetry*. In the back of the same issue, he explained the poem in his "Notes on the Booker Washington Trilogy," which *The Crisis* quoted from in its "Looking Glass" article. Lindsay offered some interesting racial observations in his "Notes," which *The Crisis* seems to have politely ignored. *The Crisis* did not quote from the section where Lindsay wrote, "There are innumerable Pullman porters who speak English in a close approach to the white man's way. But their thoughts and fancies are still straight from the jungle."[152] Though making no direct reference to the line of descent "straight from the jungle," Lindsay's understanding of heredity was probably at least part of the reason he was deemed "dangerous."

Thomas Gossett, in *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (1963), noted "that the Social Gospel clergymen were genuinely uncertain in the area of race theory." Gossett suggested that the clergymen argued against economic injustice but were hard

---

[151] "The Looking Glass." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (August, 1916): 182.
[152] Vachel Lindsay, "Notes on the Booker Washington Trilogy." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume VIII, No. III (June, 1916): 146.

pressed to make a distinction between economics and race.[153] He cited Washington Gladden, Theodore Munger, Josiah Strong, Lyman Abbott, Walter Rauschenbusch, George Herron, and Bishop Spalding as speaking out "fearlessly against other injustices of society," while saying "nothing with real meaning about racial injustice." Gossett argued that the issue of race had assumed the mantel of scientific fact and that any who disagreed were dismissed as "sentimental idealists" (197). Lindsay tended to espouse a Social Gospel agenda, but like those who spoke from the pulpit he equivocated on the issue of race, probably for much the same reason (Massa 67).

Lindsay's "Notes on the Booker Washington Trilogy" explained that Simon Legree, the antagonist in the first section of the poem, was meant to represent "a serious attempt to record the devil-fear that haunts the [black] race, though it is written with a humorous close" ("Notes" 146-47). "Devil-fear" and "haunts" could be seen as typical characterizations of blacks as superstitious.[154] Lindsay argued a stereotype for the benefit of *Poetry's* predominately white audience. Lindsay's "Notes" also revealed the "gratitude" blacks should feel for the efforts of Harriet Beecher Stowe in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and John Brown for his sacrifice: "And Negro leaders of whatever faction hope for the day when their race will be truly redeemed" (147). There's no missing the perspective that whites have led the movement for black "redemption." And that there would be no immediate solution to the question of equality.

---

[153] Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), 177.
[154] Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South: 1790-1915* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 29.

The first chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* was about spirituality: "Of our Spiritual Strivings." That could be seen as contributing to "The Congo's" third chapter: "The Hope of Their Religion." Lindsay was inclined to a spiritual perspective anyway. He would have seized on the religious typification of blacks with both hands. Chapter twelve of *The Souls of Black Folk* was devoted to the story of Alexander Crummell. Crummell's story could stand as inspiration for the final chapter of Lindsay's "Congo," "The Hope of Their Religion." The Episcopalian Crummell fought against all odds for the sake of black folk. He went to Africa as a missionary. He was selfless, brave, distinguished, learned and caring. Lindsay favored the perspective of pastors. To see a black man, serving as a missionary, struggling to save blacks in Africa would have resonated with Lindsay.

Crummell also promoted a back to Africa movement during the Civil War, mirroring the plot in Dunbar and Cook's *Dahomey*. It doesn't take a genius to identify Du Bois's chapter twelve, "Of Alexander Crummell," as a mirror image of *In Dahomey*. Du Bois depicted Crummell as a heroic intellectual and an upright Christian. Lindsay would have seen his "Congo" as agreeing with Du Bois's emphasis on black spirituality in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Writing of Alexander Crummell, Du Bois noted:

> . . . he studied the situation. Deep down below the slavery and servitude of the Negro people he saw their fatal weakness, which long years of mistreatment had emphasized. The dearth of strong moral character, of unbending righteousness, he felt, was their great shortcoming, and here he would begin (*Souls* 156).

Lindsay's test for credibility was different than Du Bois's. Lindsay valued the perspective of prophet wizards, religious authorities. This is clear from his account of "The Congo" where he offered the commentary of "ten colored preachers" as a counter proof for his perspective on race ("Poem on the Negro" 18-19). He dedicated the poem itself to Ray Eldred, a Disciples of Christ missionary to Africa (*Collected Poems* 178). We have seen that the Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ were related and that Du Bois had already censured the church of Christ as racist. When Lindsay constructed his poem I doubt it ever entered his mind that Du Bois would read it. But once the poem was called to his attention, Du Bois would probably have noted the religious affiliation fairly quickly. Du Bois himself made an appeal to religion throughout *The Souls of Black Folk*, not just spirituality, but Christianity. And then in chapter twelve, Du Bois offered Crummell's assessment of the black race: their "dearth of strong moral character" (186).

For a poet who already believed in the limitations of black people, it would have been very easy to interpret Du Bois's critique of Crummell's as a preacher as an indictment of black folk, rather than an indictment of slavery and abuse. Du Bois had Crummell speculate on the value of his Episcopal mission:

> But to doubt the worth of his life-work,—to doubt the destiny and capability of the race his soul loved because it was his; to find listless squalor instead of eager endeavor; to hear his own lips whispering, "they do not care; they cannot know; they are dumb driven cattle,—why cast your pearls before swine?"—this, this seemed more than man could bear;

> and he closed the door, and sank upon the steps of the chancel, and cast his robe upon the floor and writhed (156-57).

As we have seen in our discussion of the correspondence between Lindsay and Joel Spingarn, the Chairman of the Board of the NAACP, Lindsay expressed incredulity at Du Bois's editorial willingness to censure his "Study of the Negro Race" (Massa 168-69). Working from the perspective of the value of religion, Lindsay's bemusement could be seen as sincere, even understandable.

Du Bois own conclusion to chapter twelve could serve as an epitaph for Lindsay:

> And herein lies the tragedy of the age: not that men are poor,—all men know something of poverty; not that men are wicked,—who is good? not that men are ignorant, what is Truth? Nay, but that men know so little of men (160).

I suspect Lindsay saw himself as *agreeing* with Du Bois's assessment of the character-flaws inherent in the black race. After all, there was a time when Lindsay had his own black servants to study and observe. Lindsay intuitively thought he understood the souls of black folk. He believed he had the truth straight from God, and was incredulous that Du Bois, of all people, would disagree.[155]

---

[155] In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay referenced Luke 4:17: ". . . he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. . ." (185). The immediate reference was to Christ, but as a metaphor the reference was more inclusive. As many Christians, Lindsay saw himself as Christ-like. The reference to Luke helps place Lindsay's perspective of himself as a religious visionary. Eleanor Ruggles, in *The West-Going Heart*, chronicled a whole series of Lindsay's ecstatic visions of God, the angels, Mammon, and other spectacular incarnations (90, 107-09, 122-24, 141, 287, 316-17). Eleanor Ruggles, *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959), 90, 107-09, 122-24, 141, 287, 316-17.

It might at first seem disingenuous to credence Lindsay's claim that he based his "Congo" on *The Souls of Black Folk*. It might seem disingenuous to argue Lindsay could so misconstrue the intent of W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls* so as to read the text as a critique of blacks. However, this analysis of Lindsay's work is informed by Social Construction, and, indeed, social construction was what Lindsay and Carlyle were concerned about. Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and Berger and Luckmann, in *The Social Construction of Reality*, argue the human frailties impacting on every decision one makes: love, fear, religious belief. The Fundamental Attribution Error is a core concept in Social Psychology. And it argues people see what they expect to see, and hear what they expect to hear.[156] Indeed, this is such an important concept that Berger and Luckmann repeat this idea one way or another virtually every third page of their study.

In this text I argue society would predispose Lindsay to read Du Bois's *Souls* for what he expected to find. I argue society would dispose Du Bois to construct arguments he was expected to write, not that he intended a racially pejorative statement, but that the argument itself would be so constructed so as to fit within social expectations. Vanessa Dickerson in *Dark Victorians* (2008) argues that *The Souls of Black Folk* was based on the philosophy of Thomas Carlyle.[157] "The Talented Tenth" can be seen as a simple elaboration of Carlylian hierarchy. Where a graduate student could recognize Carlyle's signature at a distance of almost two hundred years, one could expect a literate person of that time to see it at a glance. We have seen how Carlyle had little patience for black

[156] Kenneth S. Bordens and Irwin A. Horowitz, *Social Psychology*. Second Edition. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002), 82-99.
[157] Vanessa D. Dickerson, *Dark Victorians* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 123-24.

people and how he promoted a return to slavery as a solution to the labor problems in the West Indies. Lindsay having found Carlyle in *The Souls of Black Folk* could rightly have expected to greet a fellow traveler.

We have argued the moral or social ambiguity of Vachel Lindsay's *Art of the Moving Picture* and seen the racial content in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a text Lindsay claimed as a source for his "Congo." We will show the same racial and social ambiguities could be drawn from the work of Alexander Crummell, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Mark Twain, Lindsay having claimed both Mark Twain and Du Bois's *Souls* as source material for his "Congo." Lindsay's claim to have based his "Congo" on *The Souls of Black Folk* was not so disingenuous as it might have initially seemed.

Vanessa Dickerson wrote: "Du Bois's European and Victorian sensibilities, but especially his relation to Thomas Carlyle, if largely and systematically unexplored, have not gone unnoted" (105). Dickerson took pains to demonstrate Du Bois's indebtedness, in *Souls of Black Folk*, to Carlyle's work (93-127). But she also addressed Alexander Crummell's indebtedness to Carlyle. Crummell was a particular hero of Du Bois, and, as we have seen, served as the subject of chapter twelve of *Souls of Black Folk*. Dickerson pointed out that Crummell was particularly taken with Carlyle's endorsement of the use of force in order to ensure correct behavior. She also noted, however, that Crummell disagreed with Carlyle's "characterization of black workers as lazy" (92).

Dickerson was very careful to point out in her study the historian David Levering Lewis's observation concerning Du Bois's appreciation of Carlyle's philosophy (92). In his biography of Du Bois, David Levering Lewis wrote:

> [Du Bois's] discovery of Carlyle had an influence on his prose more enduring than Macaulay's. Macaulay's smug, practical Whig temperament was a pale inspiration next to the High Tory prejudices Carlyle expressed through effulgent adjectives and magnificent invective. The *Herald's* editor was undoubtedly ignorant of Carlyle's infamous fulminations against blacks in "The Nigger Question" as incapable of surviving outside slavery.[158]

On the one hand it seems unlikely that Du Bois would have been unaware of Carlyle's position on race. On the other hand, I am more than willing to grant that Du Bois might not have understood the depth of Carlyle's antipathy to blacks. Dickerson described Carlyle's brutal depictions of miscegenation which reminded this reader of Thomas Dixon's depictions of blacks that Vachel Lindsay had condemned in *The Art of the Moving Picture*.[159] Carlyle wrote that emancipation and miscegenation "will give birth to progenies and prodigies; dark extensive moon-calves . . . , unnameable abortions, wide-coiled monstrosities, such as the world has not seen hitherto!" (Dickerson 77). The distinction that David Levering Lewis made that Dickerson, seemingly, was less willing to grant was the depth of understanding Du Bois obtained in his reading of Carlyle. Dickerson suggests that Du Bois did not understand the depth of Carlyle's antipathy to blacks. However, simply because Du Bois did not understand, it does not follow that

---

[158] David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race: 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 75.

[159] Vanessa Dickerson pointed out in her text that Carlyle referred to black people as "two-legged cattle," and that he favored focusing on the Irish problem over blacks because the Irish were more likely to "impede white progress" (76-77, 81, 83-84).

Lindsay did not understand. I suspect exactly the opposite. Given Lindsay's predisposition to set black outside the sphere of social interaction, I suspect Lindsay would have focused on Carlyle's perspective on race when reading *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Though Carlyle was only mentioned once in *Souls of Black Folk*, it is easy to see the Du Bois connection to Carlyle (Du Bois *Souls* 102). The "Talented Tenth" reflected Carlyle's emphasis on hierarchy and leadership. The historian Francis L. Broderick, in *W. E. B. Du Bois* (1959), wrote:

> To the ears of Du Bois's opponents, this theory, from the mouth of one who was undoubtedly a member of the Talented Tenth, had a selfish, self-serving ring, and its echoes of the heroic vitalism of Carlyle and Nietzsche do not recommend it to modern ears.[160]

Alexander Crummell was presented in *Souls of Black Folk* as a kind of prophet hero. Both Du Bois and Carlyle were concerned with the "spirituality of their societies" (Dickerson 95). Both *Sartor Resartus* and *Souls* were "biographical and messianic" (96). Both called upon "will and courage" to understand the "secret" of their age. Both expressed their faith in the hero as an exceptional man sent of God (98). Both believed in the efficacy of work. Both eschewed the influence of Mammon (100). Both insisted the strong should rule the weak (102). Both came to condemn democracy as a vehicle for change (104). Given Lindsay's own emphasis on Carlyle, I think it entirely reasonable to credence the poet's claim to having used *Souls of Black Folk* as source material for "The

[160] Francis L. Broderick, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), 74.

Congo." Referencing Carlyle with a knowledge of that philosopher's racial bias as a kind of reader's guide, *Souls of Black Folk* could have been legitimately misunderstood.

Even when looking at Lindsay's "Booker Washington Trilogy," one can see references to Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*. It was not that Lindsay merely used *Souls of Black Folk* as a reference text for "The Congo." That text defined the black race for Lindsay. Lindsay read the title to *Souls of Black Folk* literally. He didn't see Du Bois's writing of black Americans so much as black people, which would be consistent with his idea of blacks everywhere being "Congo" to the bone (Chenetier *Letters* 188). Lindsay universalized the concept of race. But Vanessa Dickerson demonstrated that the much more intelligent, well educated, well travelled, and experienced Du Bois did much the same.

Du Bois universalized his American experience. Dickerson quoted Du Bois from his final autobiography as writing: "Even I was a little startled to realize how much that I had regarded as white American, was white European and not American at all" (Dickerson 111). Dickerson went on to quote from Du Bois, noting that "[i]n Europe, Du Bois had experienced 'unhampered social intermingling with Europeans of education and manners,' which enabled him to transcend his 'racial provincialism. . . .'" "He lavishes praise upon the Europeans when he credits them not just with tolerance but indeed with promotion of his very own humanity: 'I became more human. . . I ceased to hate or suspect people simply because they belonged to one race or color. . .'" (Dickerson 111).

Du Bois only gradually came to understand America was not the world. Lindsay never came to that understanding. Du Bois only gradually came to understand, and overcome, his own "racial provincialism." Both Du Bois and Crummell had the advantage of living abroad and escaping American culture; they had the advantage of being able to compare cross cultural perspectives. Always an American first, always an American, Lindsay never had the luxury to be able to set aside his cultural heritage in favor of a broader perspective. Lindsay wrote from and experienced a more limited human perspective. Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* seemed to suggest that is the function of culture, to limit one's choices to an acceptable and predictable few (44-45). This is the same sense one would draw from the social psychology of Erving Goffman's *Asylums* (1959):

> Each moral career, and behind this, each self, occurs within the confines of an institutional system, whether a social establishment such as a mental hospital or a complex or personal and professional relationships. The self, then, can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self as constitute it.[161]

[161] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 168.

Lindsay's poem, "The Booker T. Washington Trilogy," could be read as an earlier draft of "The Congo." It had much the same structure, the first section devoted to the definition of evil, the second section devoted to the definition of good, and then a resolution of conflict, a figurative interracial marriage between King Solomon and "The Queen of Sheba." It was very clear in the text that the white King was to take the lead in that relationship. So, the "Booker T. Washington Trilogy" was really about how white society should be expected to lead, direct, or educate black society in avoiding the two faces of violence, Simon Legree and John Brown. The social hierarchy was clear, though there was a sense of a paternal or accepted social responsibility.

There were only two black characters in "The Booker Washington Trilogy," in a poem subtitled "A Negro Sermon." With the exceptions of Uncle Tom and the Queen of Sheba, all the characters of the poem were white, and no doubt the black audience *did* react to Lindsay's "Trilogy" with the same "gratitude" they extended to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In his "Notes" on the "Trilogy," Lindsay went on to write: "I am conscious that Booker Washington might have looked upon the mere titles and ostensible themes of these pieces with a certain good-natured irony. . . ."[162] Lindsay embraced the validity of Stowe's paternalism. Lighter skinned blacks were more intelligent, more able. Race did matter. Even when Lindsay tried his best to be polite, extending the hand of equality, he expected a "certain good-natured" gratitude for the effort.

[162] Vachel Lindsay, "Notes on the Booker Washington Trilogy." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse.* Volume VIII, No. III (June, 1916): 146-48.

The first four lines of "The Booker Washington Trilogy" read: "The Booker Washington Trilogy/ (A Memorial to Booker T. Washington)/I. Simon Legree—A Negro Sermon/ (To be read in your own variety of Negro dialect.)" (Lindsay *Collected* 161). The poem was clearly intended to address and reveal the black condition. Simon Legree received a kind of Miltonesque treatment in the poem, achieving a stature not unlike Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Such determination, even in pursuit of evil, becomes admirable; there was a purpose behind the evil: "His fist was an enormous size/To mash poor niggers that told him lies:" (*Collected* 162). So, from Legree's perspective, the poor niggers brought the mashing on themselves; if they'd been honest to begin with none of this would have happened.

In the second chapter, entitled "John Brown," John Brown becomes a metaphor for the Archangel Michael, judging the world with a shot-gun "Across his knees" (*Collected* 166). And the third chapter, entitled "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," portrayed a Negro church service. Explaining the poem, Lindsay wrote:

> The fundamental difficulty of Negro sermon poems of this type is that there is a profound seriousness of passion in the midst of things at which the outsider is fairly entitled to smile; and when a white man tries to render this seriousness and this humor at the same time, he is apt to be considered more of a humorist than a sermonizer. . . . I will venture that the average reader will consider it nine-tenths humorous, through lack of familiarity with that amazing figure, the Negro preacher, who is just as

> unique and readily at hand now as he was twenty-five years ago, when he was much more discussed and parodied ("Correspondence" 54-55).

Lindsay's intended average reader was clearly white. And Lindsay's observations, published in *Poetry* in explication of the poem, would seem to have paraphrased Du Bois. Du Bois wrote:

> Those who have not thus witnessed the frenzy of a Negro revival in the untouched backwoods of the South can but dimly realize the religious feeling of the slave; as described, such scenes appear grotesque and funny, but as seen they are awful. Three things characterized this religion of the slave, --The Preacher, the Music, and the Frenzy. The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil (Du Bois *Souls* 190).

Lindsay wrote about how the reader would smile at their passion, reflecting Du Bois's "funny." Though told he was around black servants all his life, and though he seemed sincere in wanting to project the concept of a common humanity, Lindsay had little clue as to what constituted black society. And, at least in part, he understood this. In his letter "To George Brett, Jr.—The Macmillan Company," dated July 2, 1916, he wrote:

> Thank you indeed for your letter. I am so glad you consider the Booker Washington Trilogy alive and not dead. As to the suggestion of an entire book of this nature, if it comes, it will have to come after more experience and observation with colored folks. It certainly cannot be done in a hurry. All the brotherhood I have for the black dates from the Springfield race-

> riots of 1908 when, for six months thereafter as a local Y.M.C.A. worker, etc, I cultivated a people I thought deeply wronged. I have worked that knowledge pretty thin by now. . . (Chenetier *Letters* 128-29).

Lindsay drew from primary and secondary sources, and from his own lived experience. But black society always constituted an abstraction for Lindsay. And while he saw himself as fair-minded and egalitarian with respect to black society that was an easy perspective to embrace from a distance.

As we've seen, "The Congo" opened with a portrayal of drunken black men, recalling Du Bois's critique, emphasizing blacks as drunkards and outcasts (*Collected* 178). After the depiction of drunken black men we get a retrospective of black heritage, their African ancestry, reflecting their basic savagery:

> Then along that riverbank
> A thousand miles
> Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
> Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
> And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
> And "Blood" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
> "Blood" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors. . . (179).

And then, all in the first chapter, we get, an account of how their basic savagery affected white men who strayed too near to Africa:

> Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
> Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.

Hear how the daemons chuckle and yell

Cutting his hands off, down in Hell. . .

"Be careful what you do,

Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, . . .

Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you. . . (180).

Notice that this first chapter of "The Congo" paralleled what W. E. B. Du Bois wrote about blacks in Africa: "Weird midnight orgies and mystic conjurations were invoked, the witch-woman and the voodoo-priest became the center of Negro group life, and that vein of vague superstition which characterizes the unlettered Negro even to-day was deepened and strengthened" (*Souls* 198). Voodoo, blood lust, evil, cannibals, demons, the supernatural, witchcraft, these were ideas embedded in "The Congo" that could well have come from a reading of Du Bois.[163] One could read Du Bois's depiction of black Africans as a tongue-in-cheek reflection of how white people see black people from a black perspective. One could read Du Bois's depiction as satire. However, Michael Omi and Howard Winart, in *Racial Formation in the United States* (1994), point out that understandings of race are mediated by language:

Race becomes 'common sense'—a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world. A vast web of racial projects mediates between

[163] Du Bois's analysis of African religious practices and how they translated to America went on for about two pages and paralleled the structure and themes of Lindsay's "Congo." Charles T. Davis, in *Black is the Color of the Cosmos* (1982), notes much the same thing, pointing out that "A significant aspect of the development of the conviction about the Negro genius and its peculiar cultural offerings was the tendency of Negro writers to flirt with theories of distinctive characteristics inherent in the race itself. . . . Neither scholar [neither Alain Locke nor W. E. B. Du Bois] hesitated to flirt with theories of inherited characteristics. . ." (218-20). Charles T. Davis, *Black is the Color of the Cosmos: Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942-1981*. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 218-20.

> the discursive or representational means in which race is identified and signified on the one hand, and the institutional and organizational forms in which it is routinized and standardized on the other.[164]

Du Bois might well have intended his depiction as satire, but Lindsay's "common-sense" perspective of race would have mitigated against a satirical interpretation in favor of an agreement in fact. Lindsay's understanding of black heritage and race would have caused him to see Du Bois's depiction of violence, pagan idolatry and blood-lust, as an agreement in fact. This would have allowed him to seize upon Du Bois as an authority in agreement with his perspective, much in the same way he did with Dunbar and Cook, applying Du Bois's perspective as a simple statement rather than a complex satirical projection.

Du Bois made a distinction between past and present, Lindsay much less so; what was *is* for Lindsay. For Lindsay, as for Carlyle, history was circular and repetitive. At the end of the first chapter of the poem, Lindsay made reference to Leopold II of Belgium, discussing how the basic savagery of black people infected everyone, black and white.[165] By implication, black people carried the potential to infect civilization, which, again, was a Carlylian perspective.

In a letter to Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry*, dated February 16, 1914, Lindsay wrote that "The Congo" was about "Pygmies and the Mountains of the Moon;"

---

[164] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 1994), 60.

[165] Leopold II ran the Congo as his personal fiefdom, instituting a monumental reign of terror, in the name of profit.

he said this referred to Henry M. "Stanley's Darkest Africa."[166] The "Mountains of the Moon" could be translated here as meaning "a long way away," or "from beginning to end." But the metaphor, within the context of Lindsay's "Congo," was meant to refer to the heroic effort to carry civilization and Christianity to every corner of the world. And the implication was that the only corner of the world still left bereft of that message was Africa.

> A Roaring, epic, rag-time tune
> From the mouth of the Congo
> To the Mountains of the Moon (*Collected Poems* 179).

Black Africans were seen as heathen as well as savages. If one accepted Lindsay's concept of race as a core attribute of an individual, remembering that Lindsay wrote "A Negro at the North Pole is Congo to the marrow of his bones. . .", then an extension of that perspective would be to see all blacks, everywhere, as heathen savages (Chenetier *Letters* 188). In writing "The Congo," Lindsay argued the need to promote a global standard of civilization and Christianity even on the continent of Africa. And that project was the basis of his novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920).

In a letter to Harriet Monroe, dated February 17, 1914, Lindsay wrote,

> . . . The first section [of "The Congo"] deals with the basic savagery of the Negro. The Refrain is "Mumbo Jumbo Will Hoodoo You". By implication, rather than direct statement, the refrain stands for the ill fate and sinister power of Africa from the beginning. I do not say so—but the

[166] The phrase "mountains of the moon" was fairly ubiquitous at the time, also appearing in chapter nine of Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows* (1908), for example.

> Civil War was a case of Mumbo Jumbo hoodooing America. Any Lynching is a yielding to the power of the Hoodoo. Any Burning alive, or hand-cutting depredations by Leopold, is a case of Mumbo Jumbo Hoodooing Civilization. In the second section the Irrepressible High Spirits of the negro—as set forth in a sort of Grand Opera Minstrel Show in part compensates for and overcomes the Hoodoo he brings. All the ragtime elements of our minstrelsy and the Cake-Walk, etc are here symbolized [sic] (Chenetier 90).[167]

Africa was inherently evil. Blacks inflicted lynching on America. America has been Hoodooed. But note also the "Grand Opera Minstrel Show," which he did not mention in his letter to *The Crisis*. Du Bois, or a *Crisis* subscriber, might well have put two and two together if mention of "Dahomey" and a "Grand Opera Minstrel Show" had occurred on the same page. Lindsay tailored his commentary to the specific reader.

Mark Twain's analysis of Leopold and the Congo, in *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (1905), took a different tack than Lindsay's. Twain did not blame blacks for the imposition of lynching, quite the reverse. In his *Soliloquy*, Twain had King Leopold blame the African natives for teaching Europeans to maim and mutilate, but Leopold's

[167] In a letter to Louis Untermeyer, dated April 14, 1914, Lindsay provided another description of his inspiration for "The Congo:" ["The Congo"] "It is equal parts (1) The death of a Missionary on the Congo. (2) a Cannibal War dance. (3) The Springfield Illinois Race Riots [of 1908] (4) The burnings alive of Negroes in the South. (5) The Camp-Meetings of half-Wild Negroes. (6) A Bert Williams Negro Comedy Co. (7) A Minstrel Show. (8) Joseph Conrad's African sketches. (9) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (10) The Emancipation Proclamation. (11) The Songs of Stephen Collins Foster. (12) *The Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois" (Chenetier *Letters* 95). If we look at Lindsay's February 17 letter as a guide, then it would seem that the number 4, Negroes being burnt alive, could be ascribed to "the sinister power of Africa," without necessarily implicating potential white imitators, or American Leopolds.

narrative critics immediately came back with the argument, "If a Christian king can perceive a saving moral difference between inventing bloody barbarities, and *imitating them from savages*, for charity's sake let him get what comfort he can out of his confession!"[168] Twain placed blame on Leopold for refusing to resist savagery, insisting on Leopold's culpability; Lindsay placed blame on "the ill fate and sinister power of Africa from the beginning," the idea of Africans infecting all those around them. The works of Twain and Lindsay represented two different views of the same issue, though Lindsay claimed Twain as a source of inspiration.

In much the same way that Lindsay looked up to Du Bois, he also claimed Mark Twain as a mentor. In Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), the black boy passing as white, Tom Driscoll, demonstrated an incorrigible nature.[169] And even in *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) there was a moral ambiguity built into freeing nigger Jim. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, in *Was Huck Black* (1993), suggested Mark Twain wrote ambiguously or with reservations concerning race. She wrote:

> If Twain had thought of the subject at all he might have suspected that acknowledging the African-American roots of his language and his art would not help his reputation in an era when the language of African-Americans was constantly held up to ridicule. A comment on an unlined sheet of note paper in Twain's papers suggests his keen awareness of the

[168] Mark Twain, "King Leopold's Soliloquy." *Following the Equator and Anti-imperialist Essays: Mark Twain*. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editor. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.
[169] Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins*. Malcom Bradbury, Editor. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 226.

> gap between what one said and what one really believed. 'Everybody's Private Motto: It's Better to be Popular than Right'.[170]

Du Bois's problem of the color line cut very deep. Even sympathetic authors wrote ambiguously on race. Du Bois himself did not escape that trap. In the pre World War II editions of *The Souls of Black Folk,* Du Bois dealt very harshly with Jews.[171] Lindsay also wrote of race and equality ambiguously. Much like Walt Whitman in "Song of Myself" (1855), Lindsay would probably have answered the charge of ambiguity, chanting: "Do I contradict myself?/ Very well then I contradict myself,/ (I am large, I [encompass] multitudes.)."[172]

In a letter to A. J. Armstrong, dated April 21, 1919, Lindsay cited his liberal credentials: "You see I had felt that my semblance of toleration of the Negro had forever debarred me from the South. . ." (Chenetier *Letters* 179). However, when Lindsay's book of poetry, *The Congo* (including the poem by that title), came out in 1914, the critical press reviewed it without commentary regarding race. The reviewers seemingly saw nothing worth taking Lindsay to task on. Alice C. Henderson, the poetry editor for *Poetry*, commented on Lindsay's book, "The Congo, his impressionist poem of the negro temperament, is published for the first time. . . ," without further reference to race.[173]

In the letter Lindsay wrote to J. E. Spingarn, on November 2, 1916, the letter where Lindsay noted "*The Crisis* took the trouble to skin me not long ago," Lindsay

---

[170] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 118.
[171] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Twenty-Second Edition. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company, 1938), 170.
[172] This is found in Section 51 of Whitman's "Song of Myself." Walt Whitman and Francis Murphy, "Song of Myself." *Walt Whitman: the Complete Poems* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986), 737.
[173] Alice C. Henderson, "Reviews." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume V (October-March 1914-5); 298.

wrote that all of his work was to be interpreted within the context of his short story, "The Golden-Faced People," "the index to all subsequent work" (Chenetier *Letters* 134-35). In a postscript to the letter, Lindsay asked the editors of *The Crisis* to note that he "discussed" (politely denounced might be a better phrase) the Reverend Thomas Dixon in his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). Lindsay seemed honestly bemused that *The Crisis* would critique "The Congo" after having published and praised his short story "The Golden-Faced People" in 1914, a story which also focused on race (135). The difference between the two texts was that in "The Golden-Faced People" Lindsay argued slavery and racial oppression could be imposed on virtually any society, due merely to the caprice of power. In "The Congo" Lindsay suggested slavery and racial oppression were the natural result of black heathenism and savagery. In "The Golden-Faced People" Lindsay portrayed enslaved whites as sober, hard working and deserving. Conversely, "The Congo" featured black cannibals, savagery and voodoo.

In "The Congo" Lindsay felt he had projected an accurate and honest depiction of what it meant to be black, albeit from a white perspective. He felt he had addressed the topic, and shown sympathy for a possible future equality of the Negro. Insofar as he claimed Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* as one of the bases for his texts, Lindsay seemed doubly bemused at the reaction of *The Crisis* to his work.[174]

[174] Other authors have claimed that *The Crisis* praised "The Golden-Faced People" when it came out in 1914, not only Marc Chenetier (135). I've looked through the 1914 editions of *The Crisis* and have found no editorial reference to "The Golden-Faced People." Other than what can be seen as a positive response, because the story was published in *The Crisis*, I wonder if other references are not just repetitions of Chenetier's statement, which he gives no footnote or citation for.

Lindsay was not so much mean-spirited as naïve, simplistic, and maybe a bit self-serving. He clearly noted his sympathy for blacks as did Mark Twain. He wrote editorials against the lynching of blacks. He fantasized a sacrificial role for himself where he would take the place of a Negro about to be lynched (Ruggles 250). I suspect Lindsay never (or perhaps only imperfectly) understood the distinctions between his beliefs and those of Du Bois in *Souls of Black Folk.* I suspect Lindsay used *The Souls of Black Folk* and the work of Dunbar and Cook as a kind of summary of the lives of black folk, and that he (Lindsay) was genuinely confused at the lack of appreciation accorded his texts in *The Crisis*. He probably saw himself as illustrating what Dunbar and Du Bois had written. Du Bois wrote about the difference between the black and white experience in America, and Lindsay seized upon this dichotomy from a kind of Booker T. Washington, separate but equal, perspective and expanded upon it, arguing black and white perspectives as separate and distinct, today and always. One could read a Carlylian interpretation of race as a separate but equal statement. Never particularly sensitive or subtle, Lindsay simply missed the point that Du Bois was arguing *against* the separation, *for* a common humanity, but even Du Bois characterized Jews as separate and distinct. Lindsay could well have read *Souls* as an argument *for* racial distinction, Du Bois simply creating a different hierarchy, much as Lindsay himself tried to do with his Indian heritage.[175] Lindsay no doubt saw himself as arguing Du Bois's agenda, and never seems

[175] In the 1938 edition of *Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois makes reference to "the enterprising Russian Jew who sold it [the farm] to him, pocketed money and deed and left the black man landless. . ." (170). In the 1989 edition, the section reads, "the enterprising American who sold it to him. . ." (119). Du Bois himself changed his perspective of racial stereotypes over the years. If the much more sophisticated Du Bois could make such ethnic mistakes, perhaps a much more limited man, such as Lindsay, might also.

to have understood why he wasn't accepted by the very people he wrote for and about. He expected the same "gratitude" he saw blacks as having offered Harriet Beecher Stowe, and he would never have understood that sense of "gratitude" as a projection of white expectations.

By the end of 1919, Lindsay worked at moving beyond "The Congo." Increasingly he understood that his audience did not grasp the egalitarian message he intended in "The Hope of Their Religion." Rather the audience seized on the spectacle and the implicit inferiority of the Negro. In 1931 Lindsay wrote,

> They [the audience] accept the Congo and Booth about which I am hectored beyond all human endurance, only as stunts and curiosities. I know they would not cross the street to help a nigger or The Salvation Army as a result of this dress-suit heckling. They want them merely as stunts (Chenetier *Letters* 453).

In response to Lindsay's stated desire to move beyond "The Congo" and the oral performance of poetry, Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry*, wrote:

> Mr. Lindsay is like to find as many barriers to his escape from 'jazz' as Mark Twain found between the professional humorist of a temporary mode and the great ironist of a larger scope which his admiring nineteenth-century world never quite permitted him to be.[176]

The older he became, the more Lindsay struggled to escape the poetic heritage he mimicked and tried to turn in "The Congo." Even by 1921 Lindsay found himself

[176] Harriet Monroe, "Comment: Notes and Queries from Mr. Lindsay." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume XVII (February, 1921): 263-64.

writing, ". . . I dislike the very name of every poem I have recited except 'The Chinese Nightingale,' which after all I now recite very seldom" (Monroe 263).

By 1931 he became increasingly enmeshed in serious altercations with his audiences for refusing to recite "The Congo," despite the vociferous insistence of his agent (Ruggles 410-11). By the end of his life, Lindsay had begun to understand that his ideal of putting forward what he considered a human portrayal of the Negro's eventual escape from savagery had become a comic farce; the audience saw the message as "their basic savagery" and not "the hope of their religion," that it was the rhyme and the performance that mattered to his audiences, and not what Lindsay saw as the potential for humanity inherent in the poem.

Just as Du Bois learned to edit out his critique of the Jew as an unnecessary stereotype, lacking in sympathetic understanding, Lindsay also began to see through the limitations of his own conceit, referring to audiences asking him to repeat, ad infinitum, his "Study of the Negro Race," as "tyrannical, ignorant mobs" (Ruggles 414). The irony of Lindsay forced into reciting a poem, dedicated to the Negro race, a poem that *made* his career and saved him from life as the village idiot, a poem he had in large part excerpted from the work of black authors, the irony that he came to hate the poem as a superficial facade is both apt and poetic. For Lindsay, seizing on popular culture as a vehicle for social reform was like grasping a wolf by the ears.[177]

[177] This is a nod to Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase, concerning blacks and emancipation. In his July 6, 1852, eulogy for Henry Clay, delivered in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln said: "But as it is, we have a wolf by the ears and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go." The statement is a direct quote from Thomas Jefferson, and in that sense represents an appeal to authority. Thomas Jefferson writing on much the same subject in a letter to John Holmes, dated April 22, 1820, stated: "But as it is, we have a wolf by

"The Congo" needs to be read in conjunction with Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven." If one reads "The Congo" as a rewriting of Dunbar and Cook's *In Dahomey*, then Lindsay's two poems go hand in hand, and actually the two poems were written almost simultaneously, almost as a piece. In *Dahomey*, there is a segment devoted to the Salvation Army, and that was where the "boom boom boom" came from, in both *Dahomey* and "The Congo." In "General William Booth" the "boom boom boom" is implied; the first line of the poem, Chapter I, reads: "(Bass drum beaten loudly.)" (*Collected* 123). As we've discussed, the drum was the signature sound and symbol for the Salvation Army. Lindsay tended to see the drum as a symbol for religious salvation, foreign missionary work, and home missions.

The two protagonists in *Dahomey* (Shylock and Rareback) saw the Salvation Army more as a symbol of oppression, maybe desperation, but certainly not belief. One of the prime messages in all of Lindsay's work was spirituality; for the protagonists of *In Dahomey* the issue was to find a tangibly better life—now, and not in the hereafter. Lindsay taught the importance of belief, spirituality, and religion, without hearing or attending to the counter message of the blacks in *Dahomey*, or the "cavemen" in the tenements of the cities, whether drawn from Jack London or Jacob Riis. Tangible desperation, now, was not what Lindsay was concerned about.

Lindsay's sense of transcendence made the tangible world of less import than the spiritual. Lindsay blamed drink on degeneracy and not desperation. The "fat black bucks

---

the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go." Both ideas and language transcend lifetimes in shaping the world around us. It is unlikely a single man, such as Lindsay, would have been able to reshape that pattern, using the pattern.

in a back barrel room" are not like the protagonist in Keat's "Ode to a Nightingale." Drink was not the consequence of, or the tension between, awareness and being. Drink was a sign of depravity, racially linked. As the barrel house blacks of "The Congo," the blacks in *Dahomey* bartered whiskey, and for Lindsay that would have marked a fundamental distinction between social acceptance and rejection.

Lindsay's "Congo" represents an example of contested terrain where one party, Lindsay, was unaware the terrain was even being contested. Paul Dunbar was well aware of the ambiguity inherent in his use of minstrelsy and dialect, "and fearful that his own work contributed to the political project of dehumanizing blacks."[178] Lindsay, on the other hand, was not a sophisticated observer of the human condition. If ever even aware of Dunbar's "Ante-Bellum Sermon," he might well have misunderstood the poem as the voice of patience, speaking of slavery from the perspective of gentle supplication, without outrage and without demands.

Lindsay was sympathetic to the plight of the downtrodden, but like most people, he tended to see race in the light of what he already knew, finding what he expected to find. And Lindsay was so convinced of the reality of his perspective that he seldom seemed to allow for the possibility that this reality *could* be contested. The validity of his perspective was transparent, to him, and he was completely dumbfounded by the opposition he met from *The Crisis*.

Lindsay saw minstrelsy as the racial reality, *the* reality of being black. "The Congo" represented the way Lindsay saw black people portraying themselves (in

[178] Barry Shank, "Bliss, or Blackface Sentiment." *Boundary 2* (Summer, 2003): 52-53.

Dahomey and the "sorrow songs" from *The Souls of Black Folk*). Lindsay was not willingly obtuse; he was not the Reverend Thomas Dixon, but the reality had been so implacably defined for him as to become ossified. He saw no possibility of a divergent view. The value of "The Congo" is not to be found as an example of racism at the turn of the century. Examples of racism at the turn of the century were rampant.

The value of "The Congo" is to be found in how reality was constructed, and reconstructed, individually and socially, by a poetic philosopher who sympathized with the plight of blacks and tried to frame the best of all possible worlds on their behalf. Lindsay's limited vision denied the possibility of integration. Watching Lindsay construct his life and logic is like watching a contortionist pretzel himself around seemingly impossible angles. Or, conversely, it is to view Franklin Roosevelt "seated" in a decade of newsreels, newspapers, and photos, without ever wondering why.

"The Congo" as a document based on the work of black authors, a work that provides Lindsay economic support throughout his adult life, a work castigating black fallibility and moral weakness, ultimately supports the very conditions Lindsay claimed to decry: jazz, salaciousness, hedonism, racism, and (the tradition of benign) slavery; it was true Lindsay tried to turn these issues back on themselves, but the failure in this endeavor was complete, and damning.

Lindsay addressed the artistry and beauty inherent in the "sorrow songs," the slave spirituals mentioned in both "These Ten Lectures," and *The Souls of Black Folk*, as opposed to the *cause* of the sorrow, slavery and oppression, which received only cryptic and passing reference in any of his published works. The failure to carry home a social

critique of slavery brings into question the sincerity of his effort to view the black race to begin with. He did promote racial tolerance and acceptance, his poem "The Jazz Bird" being only one example of the effort. But Lindsay was selective concerning the groups which deserved tolerance and acceptance, the degree to which those groups *should* be accepted, and there was also his unfortunate tendency to equivocate.

Uplift meant that things could be better, and "The Congo" did suggest "The Hope of Their Religion." However, when Lindsay applied this concept of uplift to blacks, though it did mean improvement or betterment, it seldom, if ever, meant equality. Spirituality was Lindsay's topic, morality and ethics. He addressed race within that frame. He was middle-class literati. He *envisioned* himself as a leader of men, which was the function his *Art of the Moving Picture* (1915) and *Golden Book of Springfield* (1920) were meant to address. He saw these books as vehicles through which he could change the world. But the very failure of his *Golden Book* to achieve any type of readership at all suggests Lindsay's dreams of leadership were just that. Lindsay's world was one of words and inaction.

One can think of Lindsay as racist, but that carries the implication of both understanding and having the *ability* to stand apart from one's culture. Lindsay's sense of reality was derivative of his culture. America was his ideal, an ideal he saw as the template for the world. That was why Lindsay sought out black pastors in creating and then "performing" his archeology of black culture, "The Congo;" he was seeking out the experts, but also the purveyors of "the known." The pastors were black representatives of the reality. Pastors were the leaders Lindsay respected.

One suspects that within the first decade of "The Congo's" fame there would have been those who understood the connection between Lindsay's work and *In Dahomey*. By the second decade that connection would have become more tenuous, as memories faded. Lindsay also worked to hide the connection to *In Dahomey*. The irony of it all is to find Lindsay critiqued as racist for mimicking Paul Lawrence Dunbar, a poet of far greater skill.[179] But this would also be the sense of what both Berger and Luckmann, in *The Social Construction of Reality*, and Erving Goffman, in *Asylums*, argued was the social reality. Those inside a social system view the reality from the perspective of that system, and there are penalties imposed for choosing another perspective of the "reality." When the famous twentieth century black American poet, essayist, and novelist Ishmael Reed wrote "The Vachel Lindsay Fault," which was a sweeping indictment of Lindsay's work and efforts, the fault, or at least the entire fault, should not have been attributed to Lindsay alone.[180] When Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Ishmael Reed, among others, mock and condemn Lindsay, individually, for his poetic contribution to racism, they ignore the contributing causes, the difficulty inherent in turning racist momentum to a new understanding, and in promotion of their ideals they turn a blind eye to the racist limitations of their own cultural icons.

Though I think it somewhat naive or disingenuous, one *could* see Carlyle's philosophy as color blind, as David Levering Lewis suggested on behalf of W. E. B. Du

[179] Rachel DuPlessis, Susan Gubar, Charles Glicksberg, and Walter C. Daniel, among others, critiqued Lindsay's "Congo" as racist or contributing to racism.
[180] The text of Reed's poem, "The Vachel Lindsay Fault," reads: All wines are/ Not the same/ Red, nor are/ All bloods/. Nothing to/ Brood about/ But, nevertheless/ A dud" (*Chattanooga* 38). Ishmael Reed, "The Vachel Lindsay Fault." *Chattanooga* (New York: Random House, 1973), 38.

Bois. But rather than naïve, one could term that perspective "hopeful," paralleling the title of the third chapter of Lindsay's "Congo:" "The Hope of their Religion." If not explicitly mercenary, Mark Twain came close to that in depicting his own motivation concerning race, though regretting the necessity of racial prudence. Concerning Twain's ambivalence on issues of race, Shelley Fisher Fishkin wrote:

> Twain had planned to write a book on lynchings, but then thought better of the project. "I shouldn't have even half a dozen friends left after it issued from the press," he wrote his publisher. He abandoned the project.[181]

The authors of *In Dahomey* were also suggestively mercenary, pandering to the stereotypes of the day. And one could see much the same motivation behind Frances Willard's decision to blame drunken unlettered blacks for their own unschooled ignorance, Willard seeking the support of registered Southern voters on behalf of her temperance campaign. And these representations, from scholars and intellectuals all, supported the social view of blacks as morally and intellectually wanting. All of these actors can be seen as contributing to a denigrating social stereotype, regardless of their intent, regardless of their reservations.

When Lindsay conducted his study on the "negro race," citing Du Bois, Twain, the temperance movement, and the work of Dunbar and Cook, and when that study rested its case on a racist foundation, Lindsay should be found no more culpable or deceived than his sources. Lindsay's "Congo" was the product of a collective social mandate defining how one *should* see and believe, and that was a central tenet of Carlyle's

[181] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Mark Twain and Race." *A Historical Guide to Mark Twain*. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

philosophy. There were those among his sources more jaded and self serving; there were those who were less naïve and willing to believe, but Lindsay should be counted as no more than *a* member of that "conspiracy," blithely trusting his sources to communicate the "reality" in simple straightforward prose, though no doubt experiencing the gratuitous satisfaction in finding his own beliefs reflected in that prose. In Social Psychology this is referred to as the Confirmation Bias (Bordens 91). One looks for reasons to confirm one's own belief.

Count Lindsay an unlettered and insensitive translator rather than a scholar corrupting his sources. Some things warrant closer scrutiny. Some things remain unresolved. And there is both a personal and a social aspect to what is studied and ignored. There is *both* a self serving and social component to naivety and belief, an urge to resist "understanding" too much in the name of one's own preservation. In his letter to A. J. Armstrong, dated April 21, 1919, we saw Lindsay believed he had already compromised too much in support of racial toleration, and sacrificed too much of his credibility.

Chapter IV: Part I

The Rhetoric of Indifference and the Tactics of Delay:

Vachel Lindsay's "*Crisis*."

At the core of Vachel Lindsay's style was his definition of audience. He did not pitch his message to the highbrow, but that did not mean he tolerated lowbrow taste. Lindsay was dedicated to social uplift. His work was didactic. He targeted the largest possible audience with the expectation of promoting aesthetic apostasy, converting the masses to a proper "understanding." Lindsay wrote,

> [I]t is indeed difficult to discover the taste of the man in the street. He seems from the standpoint of culture, to be a mechanical toy, amused by clockwork. He is clipped to a terrible uniformity by the sharp edges of life.[182]

It was precisely *because* of this terrible, clipped, uniformity that Lindsay sought out rhetorical tactics that would allow for common ground, keeping the lowbrow and the highbrow, "the United States and Amy Lowell [from] barking at one another—and neither understanding the other a bit."[183] As his biographer, Eleanor Ruggles observed,

---

[182] Robert F. Sayre, Ed. *Adventures Rhymes and Designs: Including the Prose Volume Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty Together with Rhymes to be Traded for Bread, The Village Improvement Page and Selections from the Village Magazine,* (New York: the Eakins Press, 1968), 269.
[183] Marc Chenetier, "Lindsay and Imagism." *Proceedings of a Symposium on American Literature.* Marta Sienicka, Ed. (Pozman, 1979), 166.

"[H]e was inventing a ragtime manner that would fool [Americans] into thinking they were at a vaudeville show."[184]

Lindsay's rhetorical method was intended to effect bottom-up social and aesthetic reform. And because of the cultural gap between highbrow-lowbrow understanding, then and today, the sophistication of his style has been more censured than embraced. Lindsay granted the individual the right of interpretation and assumed responsibility for bringing forward a message that would be correctly understood (Chenetier 170). Lindsay wrote in a surprisingly transparent vernacular for his day, but *our* understanding of his prose requires a translation because *we* don't share the religious, political and racial beliefs that brought about Prohibition, "the war to end all wars," a ban on Sunday baseball, and the League of Nations, to name a few. The logic driving those actions was vital and coherent to the men and women living at the turn of the 1900s. They didn't see themselves as silly, naive or foolish. They saw themselves as seizing the day. And if *we* judge them less charitably, perhaps it's more a matter of our misunderstanding than their naivety.[185]

Lynn Hunt suggests people most often see the past through a normative present.

> Presentism, at its worst, encourages a kind of moral complacency and self-congratulation. Interpreting the past in terms of present concerns usually leads us to find ourselves morally superior; the Greeks had slavery, even David Hume was a racist, and European women endorsed imperial

[184] Eleanor Ruggles, *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959), 311.

[185] The psychologist Daniel Gilbert phrased it this way: "Our experiences instantly become part of the lens through which we view our entire past, present, and future, and like any lens, they shape and distort what we see. . . . We tend to forget that our brains are talented forgers, weaving a tapestry of memory and perception whose detail is so compelling that its in-authenticity is rarely detected" (49, 89). Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 49, 89.

> ventures. Our forbears constantly fail to measure up to our present day standards. [186]

A 2006 rememory of the America of 1914 encourages inconvenient truths, such as the prevalence of racism, truths that tend to be rephrased or forgotten. Most of the criticism of Lindsay's work has been framed from a New Critical, normative, "best" that is known and thought in the world perspective, and Lindsay's chosen style, focus, and uncultured audience carries a predictive value as to where he would place within that aesthetic frame.

What if the canonical readers, sitting in judgment on literary artistry, narrowly misunderstood the "art," out of context? What if Swift's *Modest Proposal* were read literally, without irony? What if one did not understand Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" as a dialogue with Schiller, the two competing versions of the "Ode" never quite reaching an articulate agreement? To view the work of "Harrington, Milton, and Sidney" as separate and distinct from that of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John and Sam Adams is to overlook the concurrence of events. A part of artistry is in being able to find, grasp, and use the available ideas, tools, and tactics of the day, the leaders of the American Revolution reshaping the dissent of an earlier generation to the new American context.[187]

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, Lindsay seems quaint and naive. He assumed Christianity. He assumed a literal interpretation of the Bible. He assumed

---

[186] Lynn Hunt, "Against Presentism." *Perspectives* 40 (May 2002): 7-9.
[187] Gordon S. Woods, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 16.

gender and race as primary traits.[188] Under the best of circumstances, it's difficult to step aside from one's own reality and grant another's perspective. But it is especially difficult if one assumes the "other" a fool to begin with. Most critics look at Lindsay from the perspective of his assumed and self-appointed persona, as spokesman for the common man, a kind of Mark Twain, but "Mark Twain" was just the stage-persona of Samuel Clemens. Samuel Clemens was a flesh and blood man, with a wife and children, a man who faced very real tragedy in his life. So too was Vachel Lindsay no less unique, bright, artistic, and tragic, in his own way, in his own style, addressing his own agenda. But Lindsay made very few distinctions between his public persona and his private beliefs. Whether one finds a text artistically compelling is one thing, but to not understand the context to begin with, and hence what has actually been said, is to take the first step in mislabeling the "other" a "fool." In Chapter III we saw Lindsay's concern over the lack of credit *The Crisis* had given him for his stand on racial equality. Here we will examine his short story "The Golden-Faced People" in an effort to determine his stance on racial equality.

Lindsay often complained of people misunderstanding and misinterpreting his literary intent, sometimes purposively misunderstanding: "Wherever I go, as a lecturer and evangelist I find myself most wrongly interpreted, *and inconveniently fibbed about*" [emphasis in the original].[189] As noted before, Edgar Lee Masters, Lindsay's first

[188] Lindsay assumed a sense of gender within race, as does Thomas Dixon in his various novels, *The Leopard's Spots* (1902) for example. White Christian women were expected to act a certain way, within the confines of the cult of true womanhood. Other women, from other races, had other priorities. Lindsay tends to create his female characters as metaphors for race.
[189] Vachel Lindsay, *Collected Poems* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1923), xxxix.

biographer, wrote: "Lindsay could not think straight in prose."[190] Lindsay could be eclectic, heavy handed, and obtuse. However, a significant part of the problem in interpreting Lindsay's work rests and did rest with an understanding of who he was and what he represented. He *presented* himself as the spokesman for the common man, the small-town mid-Westerner. His literary philosophy and natural inclinations allowed him to portray himself as a kind of Will Rogers, a more home spun Garrison Keillor or Mark Twain, not that the cultivation of an anti-intellectual persona had much to do with the reality. It didn't. Lindsay was a well read, educated man, albeit haphazardly and eclectically.

Lindsay spent close to a decade in college and art school, mostly in Chicago and New York City, this educational investment bespeaking greater aspirations than the putative model for "The Real McCoy" might suggest. For most of his life, Lindsay was more akin to an aspiring politician or advocate of religion, trying to place himself at the forefront of a rabble yearning to be free. Particularly at the beginning of his career, Lindsay promoted himself as a Populist rural reformer, but Lindsay was solidly urban middle-class, both in aspiration and upbringing.

Many scholars, such as Carl Van Doren, in *Many Minds* (1924), have taken Lindsay at face value, but Lindsay's success as an actor reflects both the charm and the tactics of the rural mystique, a mystique still prevalent today.[191] From Davy Crocket to Joel Chandler Harris' brer Rabbit, Cal Stewart, Will Rogers, and W. C. Fields, just to

[190] Ann Massa, *Vachel Lindsay: Fieldworker for the American Dream* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 14.
[191] Carl Van Doren, *Many Minds* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1924), 153.

name a few, there's a traditional anti-liberal, anti-intellectual sentiment to be found, lulling an audience to the willing suspension of disbelief with homespun simplicity. Through most of his major works, Lindsay applies the tactics of the NOW movement of the 1970's and 1980's, or the gay rights movement today. He turns an argument against the grain. He looks for ways to turn "rhetoric" against itself, taking every opportunity to bring any audience to a discussion of race, ethics and religion. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he sought to "bring any audience to an acceptance of Progressive, middle-class, Protestant, perspectives of race, ethics and religion." He was a synthesist, a nation and community builder, a sometimes hobo and poet.

In the seventy-five years since his death, Lindsay has most often been remembered as a chaw-in-the-mouth, racist, uneducated, spittoon toting hayseed, modern scholarship granting little or no voice to his "racist," by definition, rants, but this is the perspective of the late twentieth century, long after the Selma marches, or the Montgomery and Little Rock boycotts had shaped contemporary perspectives race. Lindsay was no more intolerant than most of his day, than Pound, Kipling, Garland, or Yeats, and a good deal more sensitive to the issues of race than contemporary scholarship concedes.

"The Golden Faced People" is a case in point; it highlights a subversive rhetorical subtlety Lindsay is seldom given credit for, *and* a willingness to address the injustice of race, a dangerous position to take in the first decades of the 1900s, when racially inspired

lynching rose to epidemic proportions.[192] Not everyone of that day was willing to stand against racially inspired lynching, in person and in print, with no pseudonym to hide behind, and young white middle-class poet Lindsay made his stand in *The Crisis*, W. E. B. Du Bois's chosen vehicle, dedicated to "the darker races." How brave was that? Say what you will of the "fool"; he was no coward. Scholars have generally assumed a racist agenda when looking to Lindsay, his poetry and prose. We began our discussion with a review of the perspectives of Ishmael Reed and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., both of whom read Lindsay's "Congo" as racially inflammatory. And we have seen how Lindsay rejected that perspective. But it was really in his fiction and short fiction that Lindsay developed his ideas on race, both in the sense of equality and in the sense of keeping people in their place.

Lindsay, as most people of his day, believed in a more wide ranging definition of race than we would concede; he would have argued regional perspectives on race. He would have argued that each region in America had its own racial composition and typifications: New England, the Great Lakes, the Northwest. Though he would also have insisted on a definition of race by nationality and religion: Italian, Irish, Japanese, Jewish, Catholic, Greek. . . (Massa 176-93). Today we tend to look at racial typing as self-serving hypocrisy. But at the turn of the twentieth-century, and particularly among Lindsay's white, privileged, middle-class friends and acquaintances, the idea of race as a defining factor was "just the reality," requiring little or no commentary or defense. Along with most everybody else in his social and cultural milieu, Lindsay assumed racial

[192] James Allen, Hilton Als, John Lewis, Leon F. Litwack, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000), 8-12.

types, characteristics, born-in talents and traits. And in accepting the more numerous and severe racial limitations inherent in the darker races, Lindsay promoted social equality equivocally; because the darker races were "more limited," Lindsay promoted equality as a gradual, achievable, desirable goal to be delayed until such time as the vices, peculiarities and deficiencies of race had been limited or negated. Lindsay can be seen as radically liberal for his day if only in his willingness to address miscegenation. To have addressed it at all was unusual. Lindsay allowed for the possibility of mutual and consensual affection, where most would have simply rejected such a relationship as inappropriate, as perversion, or "rape," though it is also important to keep in mind that Lindsay equivocated.

Lindsay espoused the separate but equal philosophy close to the heart of Booker T. Washington, and in so doing saw himself a proponent and supporter of "the darker races;" it was no surprise W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Crisis* was one of the first to publish Lindsay's work: "The Golden-Faced People," a short story appearing in 1914.[193] Here lies the core of Lindsay's rhetoric and tactics, tactics he would employ repeatedly throughout his career. In a thinly veiled critique of lynching, racial intolerance, and slavery, Lindsay's "The Golden-Faced People" subversively undermined both the philosophy of equality (now) inherent in *The Crisis*, and the violence inherent in intolerant white superiority. Lindsay turned both arguments against themselves. Not too shabby for a hayseed poet from the Midwest.

[193] An older, self-published, less well-developed edition of this story came out in Lindsay's *War Bulletin Number One*, dated July 19, 1909 (Sayre 280). Vachel Lindsay, "The Golden-Faced People: A Story of the Chinese Conquest of America." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (November, 1914): 36-42.

Like a ninja in the night, the first of Lindsay's rhetorical techniques was to hide in plain sight, to present the intended message as the minutia of everyday life. Lindsay's first act, first paragraph, makes connection to the popular culture of the day, seizing upon Cal Stewart's vaudevillian routine, "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry," and turning that routine from a "humorous" depiction of an incidental lynching. . . to a critique. The use of Cal Stewart's monologue demonstrated the literal nature of Lindsay's self proclaimed literary philosophy, the "Higher Vaudeville," an attempt to entertain and teach simultaneously (Massa 237).[194] "The Golden-Faced People" demonstrated the theft and incorporation of popular works into more traditional literary formats. Lindsay stole from the popular works of the day. He stole from "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry" and applied that storyline and its assumptions to his own story, "The Golden-Faced People." The skill of a thief can be seen in the fact of the theft going unnoticed.

Did the editors and staff of *The Crisis* understand Lindsay was plagiarizing Stewart's well known and oft recorded routine, or was the inclusion of the monologue an example of how popular culture subversively crosses the boundaries of race, class, and culture? I think it doubtful the staff of *The Crisis* understood the origins of the story, but just as blackface minstrelsy was used to subjectively introduce black culture from a white perspective, so too do we have an example here of white popular culture being introduced

[194] Critical reviews of Lindsay's work uniformly view the Higher Vaudeville out of context. Critics have viewed the Higher Vaudeville as a descriptive or colorful term instead of reading the phrase literally. Born in Virginia in 1856, Cal Stewart was a prominent vaudevillian working the stage from the 1890s through 1919, the year of his death; a friend of both Mark Twain and Will Rogers, Stewart affected a more rancorous style than Twain or Rogers. "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry" was a comic monologue that appeared both in cylinder form and in print at the beginning of the 1900s. See Cal Stewart's *Uncle Josh's Punkin Centre Stories* (1903) for the print version. Cal Stewart, "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry, *Uncle Josh's Punkin Centre Stories* (Chicago: Stanton and Van Vliet Company, 1905), 25-30.

back into a black forum, selectively reinterpreted and contested. Lindsay changed Stewart's message, but selectively, and to his own criteria, criteria that were sometimes at odds with the philosophy of *The Crisis*.

Lindsay, the immature writer, in T. S. Eliot's memorable phrase, didn't just "borrow. . . ." Eliot writes,

> One of the surest tests [the test of inferiority or literary merit] is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate. Mature poets steal. Bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. . . . A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.[195]

Lindsay stole from a vaudevillian who used distinctions of race with pride. The first chapter of Lindsay's short story was a rewriting of Cal Stewart's monologue, without dialect, but also without the racial slurs one would expect from both vaudeville and Stewart. Lindsay's Chinese laundryman was a conscientious, aspiring businessman. Stewart's laundryman was the "dogondest lookin' critter I calculate I ever seen in all my born days" (Stewart 25). In both the short story and the vaudeville routine there was a cultural misunderstanding or miscue leading the white protagonist to seemingly steal his own laundry, causing the Chinese laundryman to protect the unidentified "rightful" owner's goods with a broomstick. The misunderstanding of rightful ownership led to the Chinaman beaning the protagonist with the broomstick, knocking him unconscious, and

[195] Frank Kermode, Ed., "Appreciations of Individual Authors, 1918 to 1930, from Philip Massinger." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1975), 153.

from here we enter the dream metaphor, where night becomes day, and black becomes white, or, in this case, Asian.

In the dream metaphor, Lindsay's Chapter II, the racial hierarchies were reversed, the clock turned back fifty years, and an introduction to slavery, white slavery, under the auspices of Chinese domination, ensued. The time frame of the story has actually moved forward one thousand years, but the parable's intent was to recreate a picture of America prior to the Civil War in order to demonstrate how slaves, any slaves (white slaves here), could find themselves subjected, and freed. The dream metaphor reversed the identity of those who brought industrialization to the world on a mass scale, reversed the prevailing social Darwinist definition of "the fittest," spelled "Dahwin," reversed the origins of the rise of mass compulsory education, and the race of those who first conquered America—the Chinese. The Chinese are found to be masters of America in every way, financially, militarily, culturally, the survival of the fittest referring to those of Asian, and not European, descent. The seemingly one great talent or genetic advantage the native white Americans still retained was music, black face ministry reversed. And to add insult to injury, the conquered white race demonstrated a native "effeminacy" (38). How many authors from 1911 would have been willing to draw *that* comparison? If racist, Lindsay was unconventionally so.

The unconscious protagonist awoke to a new world, as a slave, with the new found ability to speak Chinese. This new world was amazingly like the America of the 1850s. Christianity was the dominant religion. There *was* a racial hierarchy, the Chinese sitting at the apex of this hierarchy. What was particularly significant in this second

chapter was Lindsay's willingness to address miscegenation. The population of the new metaphorical order was roughly divided in half: half Anglo-Saxon white, and half white-Chinese hybrids. At a time when the possibility of black-white miscegenation was scarcely acknowledged in America, Lindsay metaphorically posited the wide-spread practice of cross race households, and the superior social status imputed to those carrying some physical mark of Asian genes. The purebred Anglo-Saxons were deemed lower class misfits, the Joads, Jukes, or Bucks of the day.[196] Where *Uncle Tom's Cabin* addressed the racial superiority of half breed blacks, furtively and by implication, Lindsay stated the case for the recognized social superiority of white-Chinese hybrids, off-handedly, and as a simple matter of fact.

How did the Chinese become the dominant race in the new world order? The application of science, race war and the effects of social Darwinism: the survival of the fittest. The Chinese developed, learned and applied science and technology, even onto eugenics: "revolutionary banners proclaimed his [Dahwin's] more terrible saying, 'None but Superior men are fit to live'" (Lindsay "Golden-Faced" 37). But once this argument had won the day there was a counter-revolution, humanist in orientation, and here was Lindsay's point, the revolution removing the primacy of technology and science and returning it to the religion of Christ.

Lindsay's was a humanist ideal, and he seldom failed to discipline back-sliding scientists, mechanics, and engineers in his texts. The Chinese have tricked generations of

[196] The Joads were the struggling rural family of Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning *Grapes of Wrath* (1939); the Jukes were the eugenically inferior progeny of Richard L. Dugdale's 1875 study on prison populations; and, Carrie Buck was the subject of Oliver Wendell Homes's "Three generations of imbeciles are enough" verdict, in Buck vs. Bell (1927).

Anglo-Saxons by helping them, offering them better machines, better schooling, better architects, better accountants, which the Anglo-Saxons embraced to their own demise. The Chinese, in helping Americans, were also helping themselves, the origins of Western philanthropic endeavor revealed in the white-as-Asian metaphor. Colonialism for Lindsay was not benign, as was apparent in his most famous poem, "The Congo." In Lindsay's depiction of conquest, the Chinese embedded themselves at or near the top of established social hierarchies, providing unique services and materials that the natives could not produce themselves, becoming indispensable in the process. And in this way the Chinese supplanted the upper classes, ratcheting everyone down the social scale "through caste and serfdom to slavery." Lindsay went on to comment on the lack of white solidarity throughout this process: "Our common people did not fare as well as our cultured classes, but knew it not" (Lindsay "Golden-Faced" 38). Here was to be found a simple rebuttal to the condemnation of African-American slaves, that they sold their own into slavery. Lindsay demonstrated Anglo-Saxons would have done the same, albeit, the claim made more indirectly.[197]

And the Chinaman who led the counter-revolution, freeing the slaves, returning the humanist orientation to society, amid climactic applause, was. . . "Lin-Kon" (Lindsay "Golden-Faced" 38). Lindsay's artistic subtlety is not argued here, but rather his tactical, rhetorical grace, his ability to use the social context to make his case. White women in the new hybrid future were seen as having been sold as sex slaves, white slavery generally accepted in that society. And Lin-Kon was presented to us as having come

[197] And of course the British sold the Irish Catholics as slaves to Barbados, which is part of Jonathan Swift's critique in his *Modest Proposal*.

from the Mid-West, Mid-West China, "where the people have a rough sort of equality, being all one race." Lin-Kon led the "celestial abolitionists" in a successful revolution to free the slaves (39).

In the fifth chapter Lindsay introduced the transparent incarnation of Lin-Kon, but he also addressed the pretentious and ludicrous behavior of poor whites and half Chinese who dressed above their station, who were more anxious to appear and dress the part of upper class aristocracy than to actually be free. This is much the same critique one would find of black folk in the works of Thomas Dixon.[198] Here we have the reversal of another racial profiling technique. Blacks inappropriately dressing above their station was a common critique and stereotype of black society, and here Lindsay ascribed that same behavior to the poor white subjugated classes. The implication of white women serving as willing mistresses to powerful and wealthy Asians was introduced in the inherited Asian features of the children, the younger generation proud of their golden traits. So, just as the light complexioned blacks would see themselves as better off, the Asian featured Anglo-Saxons saw themselves as "preferred." Power, defined by race, accumulated racial traits.

The possibility of sexuality across racial lines, miscegenation, was a powerful, taboo topic for that day. In *On Lynchings* (1892), Ida B. Wells indignantly cited the President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Frances Willard, for having repudiated the possibility that white women would ever willingly have such congress

[198] Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005), 248-49.

with black men.[199] Frances Willard was indirectly suggesting "rape" as the most likely cause for the sexual congress of white women and black men, and that lynching under such circumstances was entirely understandable. Lindsay's short story inverted social perceptions of sex and race, at a time when even broaching the topic of cross racial sexuality was dangerous.

The freed Anglo slaves were not allowed to carry weapons; they resided in separate (segregated) parts of the community, and the story's unnamed protagonist, speaking before an audience of like freed Anglo slaves announced: "Our next step is not sword equality but commercial equality" (Lindsay "Golden-Faced" 39). How Booker T. Washingtonesque:

> 'Our right to political equality is written in the constitution, and as soon as we deserve it we will have it in fact. . . . We must not ask for social equality, nor to have the color-line rubbed out. Our highest dream must be, by patience and dignity, by more care for ethics and ceremony, by a sweeter Christianity to attain to a sort of *spiritual rank* with the conservative, everlasting race that still dominates' (Lindsay "Golden-Faced" 39).

On the one hand this monologue can be seen as a reversal of racial archetypes, a do unto others motif, an attempt to argue how indignant a white audience would find being forced to "deserve" equality. However, on the other hand, Lindsay was not addressing a white

[199] Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *On Lynchings* (New York: Humanity Books, 2002), 129.

audience; the story was published in *The Crisis*. He was preaching to the choir, and in preaching to the choir he was introducing Booker T. Washington's agenda, not that of W. E. B. Du Bois. The inclusion of a Washingtonian philosophy can be seen as ironic, but it need not be seen that way. Multiple statements can be interpreted differently, depending on the audience, and there would have been many in *The Crisis* readership who would have agreed with a separate but equal, go slow, approach to equality.

Lindsay appealed to a spiritual equality, a consistent theme throughout his texts, an equality in Christ. And this reflected one of his core rebukes of the future state of affairs: "Whatever we say on *Lin-Kon's Birthday*, we know a white criminal is made more famous in a day in the gold newspapers, than a white preacher can become by endless talk of 'Sweet Christianity.'" The racial reversal shows the expectation of white criminality as a given, discounting the value of a shared religion. It was the lack of spiritual equality that goaded Lindsay. The story's protagonist made plain his wish to be inoffensive, saying nothing "violent or incendiary;" nothing was said that could be perceived as impatience with the plodding pace of change (40).

Our protagonist took a walking tour deep into the heart of the exclusive Asian sectors with his Chinese host, a place beyond the pale where white men were not allowed to go, unless escorted, and dressed in a properly servile fashion. The deeper he walked into the Asian enclave the more hesitant our protagonist became. Paranoia can be a survival trait, especially when they *are* out to get you, and the racial stigma attached to "white" was obvious in this text.

Our protagonist saw the hatred in the eyes of the Asians around him, the Chinese armed “with that death-dealing electrical blade that only the pure Chinese are permitted to carry” (41). In a fit of panic, the protagonist tried to retrieve the written text of his speech from his Chinese companion; increasingly he saw his own text as evidence of a tacit insubordination, and complicity in challenging the status quo. His status as respected representative of the white lower class carried the implicit suggestion that he was a trouble maker.

His Asian companion refused to release the text. A scuffle ensured, mirroring the dispute over laundry that introduced the story; it was a minor altercation, but this was just the point. Not only was resistance futile, it incited immediate violence. The minor scuffle was viewed as insubordination, and called down the fury of both the surrounding Asian crowd and the Chinese benefactor. The pureblood Asian companion falsely denounced our protagonist as “an insulter and an incendiary,” putting words into the mouth of the young Anglo-Saxon, falsely claiming the young man had said: “The White Race or the Chinese must perish. The whole white quarter will be armed in an hour.’” In response, the surrounding Chinese cry: “Burn him alive,” and a riot ensued (41).

In the seventh chapter, the pettiness and hypocrisy of racial power was examined in reverse; the Asian overlords abused the power and respect they were accorded, on a whim, casually, calling down death and destruction on the Anglo-Saxon, hence “black,” enclave. The white segregated community was in celebration mode, and drunk. Their actions were paranoid and irrational. Any pretense of friendship between races was cast to the wind. Hypocrisy and pettiness were the lessons here, the corruption of power.

And once the scuffle escalated to a riot, the killing was indiscriminate, guided only by race.

The Chinese overlords swept through the ghettoes, killing any Anglo-Saxons to be found. The lesson in the seventh chapter was much the same as that found in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; slavery itself was the disease infecting both masters and the slaves. The right to abuse created contempt for the abused, in this case the Anglo-Saxons. Lindsay promoted this theme into a larger social context. He demonstrated that the abused were not inferior for reason of race, but for lack of power, and that this would be just as true for white as for black Americans should their situations be reversed. Those aware of the lynching practices of the day will recognize the rallying cry "Burn him alive." Racially inspired lynching of that day often culminated in immolation (Allen 97). The word "lynching," where it does not at least suggest the possibility of cremation, can be seen as a polite deception, much as the phrase "collateral damage" could be seen today, the words denying the graphic and tragic actuality of the event. When it came to murder for reason of race, Lindsay would not allow the polite euphemism to disguise the reality. Here again, this was hardly the perspective of an apologist for racism. Lindsay *was* equivocal by our standards, but the essence of his article was a demand for redress.

In Lindsay's eighth chapter, his conclusion, the dream metaphor ends and our protagonist awakens, back in the twentieth century, to find "three or four policemen [holding] the door. . . . Across the street dangled four men, hanged by the neck till they were dead." One of the officers explained the identities of the dead, the Chinese laundryman, who had initially assaulted the white patron with a broom handle, an

unknown Japanese male, a Greek, and a "nigger." The protagonist asked why the Greek and the "nigger" had been hung, the reason for the demise of the two insubordinate Asians having been transparent. We are told the Greek man had been hung because he had gotten in the way, and the "nigger" was hung out of compassion or respect: "they did not want to burn him alive on Lincoln's Birthday" (41). There ensued a comparative discussion of "nigger" lynching between an Irish policeman and a Southerner. Both agree "The best nigger on earth is not as good as the worst white man." But they disagree over *who* was entitled to perform the lynching; in the South "We don't leave the dirty work to the poor white trash." And the story ended with a short synopsis of the Southerner's Lincoln's Birthday celebration-address, the speech focusing "on Lincoln as an example of the survival of the fittest," a homespun "railsplitter," with no discussion of "race. . . at all," the guests blithely unaware of the riot and lynching going on outside (42).

The Irish police made no move to interfere with the lynching. The Southerner's objection to the principle of lynching hinged almost purely on matters of class, though there *was* the suggestion that poor white trash would have also fallen short of "the fittest" criteria. Competition for racial status was implied, the Irish succeeding to bridge the white Anglo-Saxon gap, while the Asians, "niggers," and southern European, Greeks, were obviously left back. The discussion demonstrated the issue was really not race, per se, but eugenics: "[The Southerner's speech] did not touch on the race question or the question of equality at all" (42). The Southerner has no need for a discussion of race in making his meaning clear. "Race," as a marker, had become euphemistically disguised.

Instead of referring to black and white, the meaning of the term had migrated to a social Darwinist perspective, a self evident assertion of power, requiring no defense.

Lindsay's rhetorical tactics were impressive. He brought the work of a well known, popular vaudevillian, Cal Stewart, to a publication founded and edited by a Harvard trained academic, intellectual, and scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois. Would Du Bois have been familiar with the work and perspective of Stewart? Probably not. Du Bois would have no doubt found Stewart's racial aspersions offensive, but Stewart also probably targeted a different audience for his recorded routines. Lindsay was able to bring the time-tested plot of a popular vaudeville routine to a new audience as if it were pristine. Lindsay did turn Stewart's story and its assumptions in a new direction, but the addition of Stewart's monologue did little to further the storyline or the anti-lynching message, unless one assumed the audience was aware the story was being reversed. Lindsay seemed to suggest, both in *The Art of the Moving Picture*, and in "The Congo" that bars, saloons, vaudeville, and music halls were largely the preserves of ethnicity, lower class, and race. Given that perspective, Lindsay could well have assumed the audience of *The Crisis* would have been familiar with the recordings or performances of Cal Stewart, probably an erroneous assumption. Nobody familiar with Stewart's work would fail to note the reversal of Stewart's perspective in Lindsay's text. Stewart's solution to the Chinese laundryman's inability to understand English was violence.

Lindsay used a dream metaphor, sitting atop Cal Stewart's monologue, to address the implications of a whole series of racial issues: the possibility of racial equality within Christianity, masculinity across racial lines, the unlikely nature of inherited racial talents,

social Darwinism, eugenics, segregation, lynching, miscegenation, and the corruptive nature of power. An understanding of how knowledge and culture are parsed by race, class, and religion rests at the core of Lindsay's artistry and genius. It was no accident that Lindsay wrote the first criticism of film: *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Lindsay saw the new medium of film as an opportunity for social control.

One can critique Lindsay for ham-fisted artistry, as is often done. One almost feels embarrassed at the idea of an author resurrecting the ghost of Lincoln as a Chinaman, freeing the white Anglo-Saxon slaves, a thousand years in the future on the anniversary of Lincoln's birthday. Lindsay's canonical place as a *secondary* poet and literary figure seems secure when considering such efforts. Who else would have the chutzpa to suggest the resurrection of Lincoln as Asian. . . , except, perhaps, maybe, W. E. B. Du Bois. If Du Bois could be found to have made such a suggestion, would scholars brand Du Bois "heavy handed"? Would Du Bois find himself critiqued as unsophisticated, lacking in intellectual acumen? And if we were to learn that Du Bois suggested the image of Lincoln as Asian, would this change one's perspective of Lindsay's artistry and place in the canon?

David Levering Lewis, in *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race* (1993), wrote that,

> At Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago in 1907, Du Bois had played seer with uncanny perfection, warning that the 'Door of Opportunity' was swinging shut and that times were coming 'even here in the Twentieth Century when if an Abraham Lincoln should arise in the United States

> and if he should be a Jew in race or a Japanese in color, or a Negro in descent. . . his soul would be pressed and shut out of the republic of the civilized'.[200]

Lindsay was well read, well connected, and well educated. He knew and corresponded with Jane Addams. He came to count her a friend. Lindsay made an effort to understand the issues of black culture. He had witnessed first hand the Springfield race riot of 1908, and the subsequent lynching (Lindsay *Golden Book* xii-xiii). Albeit, he was a white, privileged, middle-class young man whose exposure to black culture consisted mostly of an awareness of black-faced minstrelsy; however, he made an effort to understand, *and* he was not unsympathetic.

The basis of Lindsay's "The Golden-Faced People" was an attempt to address a primary critique of black culture, identity, and heredity. The story's message was that any people so completely subjected by means of force, science and industry to another would have learned the lesson of submission as a cultural artifact. Lindsay argued submission as a learned trait, not a racial characteristic. The story's basic supposition was that white Anglo-Saxons would find themselves just as subjugated if placed in the same environment. Lindsay argued culture and not color as the determining variable in individual and social behavior, that white was no different than black, that submission was a socially constructed response to indoctrination and overwhelming power. In all of his major works, he demonstrated an understanding of the power of social control. His attempt to use popular culture to change the direction of American society was the basis

[200] David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 342.

of his rhetoric. Lindsay envisioned popular culture as a force for conservative change, but Lindsay's basic Christian conservative conviction included the idea of an equality in Christ, across race and denomination.[201]

Black people had been critiqued as essentially passive, and nonviolent. Black men had been critiqued as lacking in the rugged individuality and masculinity of their white peers. The idea that black slaves had never been able to throw off the yoke of slavery by themselves was seen as confirmation of the essentially passive nature of the black personality. Lindsay argued that white people were no more essentially rugged than black; Lindsay argued that, just like black American slaves, white American slaves would have required outside assistance in order to win their freedom, the message inherent in the person of Lin-Kon. Lindsay argued a rough equality of race.[202] And if the resurrection of Lin-Kon as a Chinese warlord is aesthetically painful, it rests on solid ground in terms of interpreting the issues of the day, both as an address to a common critique of the black race, and as an appeal to authority in the person of W. E. B. Du Bois.

Lindsay was a product of his day, addressing the issues of his day. And he did so with a lot more subtlety than he has generally been given credit for. Two or three

---

[201] Edward Bellamy, in *Looking Backward*, suggested a parallel theme and implied critique, if "borrowed" and reversed. Bellamy wrote, "'Those Chinamen knew what they were about. . . when they refused to let in our Western civilization. They knew what it would lead to better than we did. They saw it was nothing but dynamite in disguise" (45). Lindsay projecting an America unable to resist the cultural incursions of the Chinese posits a certain lack of moral conviction, and Lindsay was aware of Bellamy's work. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. Cecelia Tichi, Ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 45.

[202] Lindsay's first book of poetry, *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems* (1913), included a poem entitled "Lincoln," one of many poems Lindsay was to write about Lincoln. The poem begins with the line, "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all. . ." and ends with "[the] fire that freed the slave" (63). Vachel Lindsay, *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven and Other Poems* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), 63.

generations after his death, Lindsay's voice has become muted to an audience unfamiliar with Cal Stewart's recordings, or the popular themes of that day.

"The Golden Faced People" attacks the indifference of race and undermines Du Bois's equality "now" politics in promoting a Booker T. Washington perspective. The story refutes the accusation of manliness as a racial trait, while turning a popular racist vaudeville routine against itself. In the guise of a naïve and feckless young poet, Lindsay apparently, effectively, and subversively persuaded the sophisticated and educated Du Bois to print a Booker T. Washington perspective in *The Crisis*, *because* the story stood in opposition to lynching and racism. In looking at a poet who saw his work as religious and political persuasion, context is almost everything. It is the language of the day. A writer suggesting Lin-Kon reincarnated as a Chinese liberator might well seem a second-rate poet, then and today, even if one understood the idea as an elaboration on a theme known to and promoted by the editor. But literature was only Lindsay's vehicle; first and foremost he was interested in reform. He attacked social indifference to matters of race, which is transparently the object of *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920). But he also understood the limits of persuasion in effecting social change, arguing a very Booker T. Washingtonesque necessity for delay.

"What I am lies between the lines of *The Golden Book of Springfield*. . . , the effort of my life." Vachel Lindsay.[203]

Chapter IV: Part II

Tell All the Truth, but Tell it Slant

Given our discussion of Vachel Lindsay's "Congo," his short story "The Golden-Faced People," and his analysis of film, *The Art of the Moving Picture*, the informed reader should view Lindsay's only novel, *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), with at least the suspicion of significant un-attributed "borrowings." That reader will be gratified. Expectations will be rewarded. In *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920), Lindsay drew from the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement, D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), Thomas Dixon's *Clansman* (1905), and Ignatius Donnelly's *The Golden Bottle* (1892).

Most readers placing Ignatius Donnelly's novel *The Golden Bottle* (1892) side by side with Vachel Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield* (1920) would see a connection. Both Lindsay's and Donnelly's texts address the city beautiful, temperance, the relationship of drunkenness to environment, feminism, the moral expression of love and chastity, suffrage, and world war—an American crusade to end autocracy. Both texts

[203] Vachel Lindsay. *A Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only* (Springfield, Ill.: privately printed, 1920), 5-6.

express a grudging, equivocal sense of racial equality. Both oppose aristocracy and support the creation of egalitarian Christian communities without creed. In their private lives, both authors spoke highly of Swedenborg, and both were sons of physicians. The plot line and themes of both texts are virtually the same. And though the names of the characters differ, the personalities the characters exhibit are much the same.

The difference would be the middle class bias of Lindsay's *Golden Book*. The main characters in Donnelly's *Golden Bottle* began the novel as lower class farmers, rising to world prominence through the process of dream metaphor, before waking to real world poverty again. For example, Donnelly's heroine, Sophie, found herself wrongfully dragged through the courts as a gold digger and blackmailer. She personally knew and associated, though disapprovingly, with prostitutes. Lindsay's heroine, Avanel, never approached the school of hard knocks, let alone prostitution. She was born to a middle class respectability that was never questioned. Hard as it might be to imagine, Lindsay's *Golden Book* represents a more in-depth and believable utopian vision for America and the world than Donnelly's. However, having said that, few would have mistaken the dream metaphors driving either text for anything even approaching reality.

Donnelly apologized for the style of his prose in the first four lines of his "Preface:"

> I feel that some apology is due to the public for the following book.

> I am well aware that it is without that polish and elaboration which should always distinguish literary work.[204]

Lindsay should have apologized for *his* prose. When Edgar Lee Masters wrote "Lindsay could not think straight in prose," he was referring to *The Golden Book of Springfield* (Massa 14). In a letter to his friend Stephen Graham, dated July 25, 1922, Lindsay wrote:

> Outside Springfield itself "The Golden Book" was a failure. . . . I put my whole strength into the Golden Book—and it remains a dull mystery even to my best friends. Nearly all reprove me for it. . . . I took it too seriously. I strained too hard. I nearly cracked my skull. I have never had as much fight in me since. I put years into that book, that will never be mine again. Some of my best friends count it utter rubbish—and an unutterable failure.[205]

When he wanted to, Lindsay wrote solid, clear, declarative, prose. The fact he had been a newspaper columnist through most of the 1920s reflected his mastery of straightforward, direct journalist's prose. However, in *The Golden Book of Springfield*, seemingly Lindsay fell prey to his own literary conceit. Much like "The Congo" and many of Lindsay's other poems, *The Golden Book* reads like nothing so much as a screen play. And, indeed, we see sections of the novel prefaced in *The Art of the Moving*

[204] Ignatius Donnelly, *The Golden Bottle: Or the Story of Ephraim Benezet of Kansas* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 3.
[205] Marc Chenteier, *Letters of Vachel Lindsay* (New York: Burt Franklin & Company, 1979), 242.

Picture (1915). The last three paragraphs of his chapter entitled "Architecture-in-Motion" could stand as a synopsis for the first third of his novel.[206] In this three paragraph section, Lindsay wrote of "secular priests" (104). Secularizing religion would be one of the primary themes in *The Golden Book of Springfield*. In like vein, Donnelly's *Golden Bottle*, a text devoted to morality, ethics, and social change, a text damning hypocrisy, suggested a more pagan than Christian sense of belief. Both texts moved away from traditional religion.

It should not have taken ninety years to draw the connection between Donnelly and Lindsay. That connection should have been obvious. Ron Sakolsky published a new edition of *The Golden Book of Springfield* in 1999 without any suggestion of even the possibility of "borrowings," plagiarism, or mention of Donnelly. Little or no criticism has been leveled at Lindsay's *Golden Book*, which is understandable, for the novel is virtually unreadable from a twenty-first century perspective.

Lindsay's novel is a cultural artifact, referencing personalities, understandings, and details obscured through the passage of time. The novel demands an intricate understanding of race in order to make sense of the extended metaphors. For example, Lindsay's heroine, Avanel, is presented as the descendant of Irish, Lithuanian, and American Indian parentage: miscegenation as a key image.[207] But not *just* miscegenation. As we've seen in his other works, Lindsay presented both Irish and Indian as deserving of social inclusion. The Lithuanian addition, however, is unique.

---

[206] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Martin Scorsese, Ed. Stanley Kauffmann, Introduction. (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 103-04.
[207] Vachel Lindsay, *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Introduction by Ron Sakolsky (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999), 61, 72.

Dillingham, in his *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (1907), noted that: "Lithuanians. . . are said to be 'pure blond' and to 'approximate . . . our Anglo-Saxon model;' that is. . . to belong to the 'Nordic.'"[208] Matthew Jacobson, in *Whiteness of a Different Color* (1998), writes that "the Senate commission on immigration reported in 1911 that Poles were 'darker than the Lithuanians' and 'lighter than the average Russian.'"[209]

Lindsay tied an almost ideal white lineage to his heroine as a statement. Amalgamation with certain races was to be permitted, even encouraged, because it allowed for the emergence of new and stronger people. He was arguing hybridization, a kind of spontaneous eugenics. Lindsay's villains, on the other hand, were primarily Slavic and Asian. Steven J. Ross, in *Working-Class Hollywood* (1998), suggested that "Eastern European" immigrants were most likely to be depicted as trouble makes in the films of the early twentieth century.[210] And Dillingham went on to say that the Lithuanians would be found "at nearly the opposite extreme from the Slavs in European ethnology" (90). The novel's female antagonist, Mara, was descended from an amalgamation of primarily Asian "mongrel" races. Some hybrids turned out badly, requiring community guidance. Race predicted a character's moral inclination in Lindsay's novel. In *The Golden Book* Lindsay demonstrated his grasp of racial subtleties, distinctions beyond the awareness of most modern readers. However, the

---

[208] Dillingham, *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), 90.
[209] Jane Addams, in *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), quoted from a University of Wisconsin study on the Chicago stock yard strikes of 1904 to note that: "The latest arrivals, the Lithuanians and Slovaks, are probably the most oppressed of the peasants of Europe" (96). Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (New York: The Chatauqua Press, 1907), 96. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69.
[210] Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 69.

opposition of female characters also recalls the storyline of Thomas Dixon's *Clansman*, where the Stonemans and Camerons were defined by the race of the female head of the household. This was also part of the plot line from D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation.* Lindsay praised the visual imagery of *Birth of a Nation* in *Art of the Moving Picture.* And he used much of that visual imagery in his novel.

The Donnelley-to-Lindsay connection also allows for another more subtle and interesting observation to be made. In the Donnelly-to-Lindsay connection we have the suggestion of the origins of Lindsay's underlying philosophy, his source material for *The Art of the Moving Picture*, "The Congo," and "The Golden Faced People." The key to this new understanding is in recognizing the feminist basis of Donnelly's *Golden Bottle*. Feminism also informed Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield*. *The Golden Book of Springfield* represents the culmination of a cycle where all the major ideas of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union have been articulated.

In *The Art of the Moving Picture* and the "Introduction" to his *Collected Poems,* Lindsay noted, over and over again, that he was a volunteer for the temperance movement. Though constantly alluded to, that relationship remained unexplained. In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay argued against the saloon, dance halls, and racial determinism and for an environmental explanation of human behavior. As we saw in our examination of *The Art of the Moving Picture*, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had a long established program supporting the use of film in temperance reform,

essentially an argument against racial determinism.[211] The use of film in pursuit of temperance reform was one of Lindsay's major themes in that first book of film criticism. In "The Congo" Lindsay offered drunken jungle savages the environmental loophole of religious persuasion. In "The Golden Faced People," Lindsay destroyed the argument for racial determinism in postulating white American slaves subject to Chinese masters.

In *The Golden Book of Springfield*, Lindsay promoted the second, but equal, priority of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, political equality, and suffrage, while continuing to argue temperance, chastity and race. John Frick, in *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-century America* (2003), writes:

> The woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). . . was a concerted, concentrated, and calculated attempt to afford women entrée into political affairs, to empower them, to bring temperance reform and women's activism into the political mainstream.[212]

In *Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay emphasized chivalry. In *The Golden Book of Springfield*, that argument shifted to an emphasis on political equality. Chivalry was still a part of the storyline in Lindsay's *Golden Book*, but it was not as tinged with the condescension one found in *Art of the Moving Picture*; rather, it was a chivalry laced with a very real appreciation for the strength, character, ability, and courage of women. That

---

[211] Alison M. Parker, "`Hearts Uplifted and Minds Refreshed': The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Production of Pure Culture in the United States, 1880-1930." *Journal of Women's History* 11.2 (1999): 135-58.
[212] John W. Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46.

said, Lindsay made it clear that the women of his utopia embraced political freedom with open arms, but not necessarily *social* freedom:

> The women [in the novel] follow their old occupations. And they have many new ones. [Here follows a long listing of professions and occupations open to women, including veterinarians, medical doctors, dentists and opticians]. But this does not mean that women monopolize such occupations. It is only a minority that leaves the home. But it is a majority that floods the elections (Lindsay *Golden Book* 91).

Lindsay went on to qualify this sense of freedom even further: "It is the dream of a human beehive far from the Marxian society. It is something on the newest New Harmony model, a Springfield that is democratic, artistic, religious, and patriarchal. . ." (96).

To use the utopian model of Robert Owen's New Harmony in close conjunction with "patriarchy" would seem to undermine the revolutionary racial and gender intent of the statement, but it would also demonstrate a typical Lindsay rhetorical technique, seeming to agree while turning an argument to a new end. Donnelly's heroine Sophie seems closer to the New Harmony model of Frances Wright than Lindsay's heroine Avanel. Donnelly's heroine ran her own charity organization, commanded her own armies, fought her own wars, all at her own behest. There was a ferocity to Sophie that made her believable. She did marry the hero and narrator of the story, but that did not make her subject to patriarchal oversight, and the implication one draws from the text is that she would not have tolerated it. Lindsay's heroine, Avanel, by comparison, was no

Sophie, let alone Frances Wright, Robert Owen's companion at New Harmony. Avanel would have been much closer to the model of Frances Willard, a proper middle class woman with forceful intent. Social propriety was always key to Lindsay's perspective on utopia. Lindsay was a consensus revolutionary. He addressed the expected norm, with amendments.

In my discussion of *The Art of the Moving Picture*, I addressed the racial views of Francis Willard, President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union from 1879 until her death in 1898. We saw that Frances Willard held race to be a valid point in the determination of equality. However, her racial argument was essentially environmental. She argued black illiteracy as disqualifying that race from governance, while simultaneously holding race to be a determining characteristic. She equivocated on the issue of race. That same perspective can be found in an 1895 *Union-Signal* article. *The Union-Signal* was the publication of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union during Frances Willard's tenure in office.

> And taking into consideration existing conditions in our own country—for the level reached in the evolutionary career of the race must always be a factor in human problems—we are confronted with the questions, Are we really helping the illiterate foreigners when we so readily confer upon him American citizenship, with all which that implies [sic]?[213]

[213] "Immigration from an Ethical Standpoint." *The Union Signal* (February, 14, 1895): 8.

Modern interpretations of feminism address its racial underpinnings. Susan Friedman, in *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (1998), wrote that "Feminism is a white middle class movement" (43).[214] bell hooks elaborated on the same theme in *Yearning* (1990).[215] Lindsay's focus on race in support of feminism would not have been anomalous in his own day. Lindsay, like Willard, addressed the topic of race environmentally, but also equivocally. One of the major themes Lindsay developed in his *Golden Book of Springfield* was the question of racial readiness for civic responsibility. The concept of civic responsibility found in Lindsay's *Golden Book* was virtually synonymous with the idea of secular religion articulated in *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Religious sects were to pass through the melting pot and achieve a kind of protestant homogeneity. In Lindsay's *Golden Book*, some races *were* found wanting, and this was particularly seen in the contrasting behavior of Lindsay's female characters, but *blacks* were not singled out for exclusion.

The title of Lindsay's novel suggests an affiliation with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Donnelly's title does this to a lesser extent. *The Golden Bottle*, in Donnelly's text, for the most part refers to a bottle containing a liquid that turns base metal to gold. However, in at least one instance, Donnelly's use of the phrase "golden world" refers to the "Millennium" (270). This is the sense of "Golden" in Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield*. Lindsay's use of the world "Golden" carries a millennial context. This millennial connotation was the sense the word carried within the Woman's

[214] Susan S. Friedman, *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43.
[215] Bell Hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1990).

Christian Temperance Union. The feminist Populist Mary Elizabeth Lease, speaking to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1890, used the word "golden" in a millennial context, referring to the new world that women would make.[216] And Frances Willard, President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, used the phrase "Golden Age" at virtually every opportunity to refer to the millennial goals of her organization: equality, suffrage, and temperance. Citing just one of many examples, Willard wrote in *The Outlook* (1894):

> . . . we believe that only the Golden Rule can bring the Golden Age. We are learning that real religion is not the acceptance of any dogma, but the recognition of Christ's life in the heart and home, in society and the State.[217]

The "Golden Age" became the slogan Willard articulated as spokeswoman for her organization. And the phrase came to symbolize the Woman's Christian Temperance Union movement itself.

The opening dedication to Elizabeth Putnam Gordon's *Women Torch-Bearers: The Story of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (1924) reads:

> Dedicated to the members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union—a multitude of home-loving, heroic and progressive patriots.

[216] Joan M. Jensen, *Within These Hands: Women Working on the Land* (Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1981), 160.
[217] Frances Willard, "The Religious World." *The Outlook* (November 24, 1894): 863.

> Their activities, for fifty years, have made possible a Golden History and a Golden Prophecy.[218]

Angela Morgan's poem, "A Golden History: A Golden Prophecy," trumpets the coming of the new millennial age: "Proclaim the things that are to be./ The rise of woman to her place,/ The coming of a nobler race" (Gordon 255). "The Golden Prophecy" referred to America's youth:

> The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is visualizing the improved conditions which await the youth of the future who, unhampered by the devastating effects of alcoholic liquors, will enter upon their high and holy duties (Gordon 278).

If we apply the literary convention that names mean something, given Lindsay's immersion in the temperance movement, and the metaphorical and not literal use of the word "Golden" in Lindsay's title, then it is difficult to avoid the conviction that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union would have been the defining organization in Lindsay's literary life.

Lindsay's *Golden Book* was not just a novel. Lindsay saw it as a political opportunity, albeit an unrealized opportunity. Lindsay saw his novel or screen play as his means to change the world, and his novel projects the Americanization of the world. Lindsay planned to use his novel as the jumping-off point for a nationwide speaking tour, addressing the nation's need for change. However, as a man who didn't go to war,

[218] Elizabeth Putnam Gordon, *Women Torch-Bearers: The Story of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (Evanston, Illinois: National Woman's Christian Temperance Union Publishing House, 1924),

Lindsay miscalculated the degree of interest a war-weary nation would have in promulgating change.

The publication of *The Golden Book of Springfield* represented a watershed event in Lindsay's life. It was the culmination of a cycle. With the completion of the novel he had articulated all of the major tenets to be found in the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement. And two of that organization's primary goals, temperance and suffrage, were made law during the war years. This, at least in part, explains why Lindsay never published another book-length prose work in his lifetime. Lindsay had articulated his philosophy. If one takes Lindsay's repeated literary "borrowings" as a lack of creativity, one could easily conclude he had nothing left to say. In a sense, both Lindsay and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had met unprecedented success in achieving their goals, but Lindsay's answer to the question of life after success, taking the temperance battle to the world, while offering women a limited or "patriarchal" freedom, met with little support.

A Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only (1920) was one of several promotional brochures Lindsay mailed to prospective clients, groups and organizations, soliciting opportunities to perform his poetry. The *Wicked* letter was only one of several advertisements for one of several different thematically-based performances. Irreverent as always, Lindsay's title was much more suggestive than the content of the pamphlet. But irreverence does not imply "facetious." Lindsay was quite serious in his endeavor. His goal was to change the world, and his means was *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920). The approach taken in his advertisement clearly demonstrated this intent.

Lindsay wanted an audience composed of "the entire inner machine of the town, all types and kinds of chieftains." [219] Lindsay's intended audience was the local cultural and political elite, small town elite. Lindsay usually targeted small town audiences; those were the people who mattered to him. And the topic of discussion offered in this brochure? *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920).

The problem with Lindsay's novel was that only those familiar with Carlylian philosophy would have understood it. And the small town American local elite was probably not Carlyle's intended audience. Lindsay referred to the novel, in the novel, as flying all over the city of Springfield. He described the plumage and feathers of the book: "It [*The Golden Book*] has wings of black, and above them wings of azure. Long feathers radiate from the whirring, soaring pennons. The book circles above the heads of the congregation. From the sky comes music incredibly sweet" (20). This reference to the "congregation" was intended to call attention to the religious nature of *The Golden Book of Springfield*. And all the literary flying around, which quickly becomes tedious, was intended to show the almost universal acceptance of the text and its philosophy, how the book's message pervaded every house, shop, and building. As Carlyle described religion as a unifying force, *The Golden Book* was intended as a kind of Bible that would unite the peoples and nations of the world. Raymond Williams, author of *Culture and Society* (1960), wrote that Carlyle saw the writing of history "as a kind of Bible."[220]

[219] Vachel Lindsay, *A Letter for your Wicked Private Ear Only* (Springfield, Illinois: privately printed, 1920), 4.
[220] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 84.

Lindsay was attempting to take Carlyle's religious conception of history and present it in the form of an image. And to be fair, I doubt anyone ever understood that image.

Lindsay saw himself as having written an economic text: "For all the Golden Book is penned so gorgeously, the discussion is largely economic. There are citations from Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Henry George, and on. . ." (*Golden* 27). The text could be seen as a demonstration of social economics. But there was virtually no explanation of the economics underlying the social. Lindsay assumed that groups and communities that worked in cooperation with one another would be economically viable. And Lindsay presented this idea as a "new economic remedy for the world" (27).

Context is important in understanding the message. The novel was published immediately after World War I. Lindsay saw the war and the aftermath of war as an opportunity to change not only America, but the world. The idea was the willing cooperation of virtually all races within the perspective of a western world view. And, again, as per Carlyle, those races unwilling to cooperate with a western, but particularly American, world view would be forced to do so at the point of a sword.

Lindsay's *Golden Book* was not casual, facetious, or written for profit. It was a literary, philosophical, and political endeavor. He was demonstrating the ideas articulated in *Art of the Moving Picture*, trying to show how those pieces fit together into a nation building whole. He always viewed *The Golden Book* as his magnum opus. In a letter to A. J. Armstrong, his booking agent, dated May 1920, Lindsay wrote: "The simplest way to say it is that what I am lies between the lines of the *Golden Book of Springfield*, and I doubt if three living creatures ever read [it] in the true Henry James

way, between the lines" (Chenetier *Letters* 204). The problem with Lindsay's novel was that one had to understand its philosophical basis before having read it. One had to be familiar with the principles of Carlylian philosophy in order to be able to interpret the global message.

Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield* was intended as a social blueprint, not unlike Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), which Lindsay made reference to in *Art of the Moving Picture* (Lindsay 182-83). *The Golden Book* was to lay out the way individuals and groups were *supposed* to interact, the text identifying proper and improper action by way of race and class. A perspective or philosophy embraced by Germans, Asians, or the wealthy led to no good. In promoting discussion of his novel, Lindsay was attempting to lay out his vision of a democratic community-based, social reality, and how that vision could be achieved. The novel itself was a thinly veiled metaphor, with black society represented by an Asian extended family, the Klings. Insofar as Lindsay was drawing on both Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* (1905) and D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) for his imagery, and insofar as the Klings in Lindsay's novel had intermarried with blacks, few Americans of Lindsay's day would have misunderstood the racial symbolism.

There is a certain utility to be gleaned from obscurity. The social psychologist Thomas Szasz wrote that: "Lack of clarity may be no handicap when language is used to influence people; indeed, it is often an advantage."[221] And, as we've seen, Lindsay was no stranger to the use of propaganda. However, one can also immerse one's self in a

[221] Thomas S. Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on The Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970.

culture to such an extent we become oblivious and unaware of other perspectives. Erik Erickson, in *Young Man Luther* (1958), wrote of this process as being almost inevitable:

> . . .[O]ur own ideology, as it must, forbids us ever to question and analyze the structure of what we hold to be true, since only thus can we maintain the fiction that we chose to believe what in fact we had no choice but to believe, short of ostracism or insanity."[222]

Lindsay was steeped in a Protestant perspective ubiquitous to his day and age. Today that makes it difficult to grasp his assumptions but easy to condemn him for choosing the "wrong" way. Indeed, the course Lindsay outlined in his *Golden Book* was largely passé within a decade of World War I.

Lindsay's poem "King Arthur's Men have come Again" carried the subscript: "Written while a field-worker in the Anti-Saloon League of Illinois."[223] The theme itself required little explanation. Temperance was a powerful movement in America through World War I. And bootlegging became an equally powerful issue, once temperance had passed into law. The image of King Arthur that Lindsay used to communicate the argument, however, might not be so clear. King Arthur carried the connotation of Christianity and chivalry. In the poem, King Arthur has returned to bring Christianity and temperance to turn-of-the-century America. This was a millennial message.

---

[222] Erik H. Erickson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1958), 135.
[223] Vachel Lindsay, *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven and Other Poems* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913), 32-33.

In interpreting Lindsay's authorial intent, it helps to understand that chivalric archetypes were not *only* "popular" in that day, as seen in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* (1889), and *Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), but these were also the metaphors seized upon and used by religious organizations:

> The Church Temperance League was divided into Young Crusaders (ages 8-16) and Knights of Temperance (ages 16-21); the Princely Knights of Character Castle, founded in 1895, for boys 12-18, had offices such as "herald" and "keeper of the dungeon"; and Knights of King Arthur enlisted college boys, who could graduate from "page" to "esquire" if they read eight thousand pages of heroic adventure tales.[224]

The Union-Signal, the newspaper of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, echoed this same idea in February of 1895:

> The opposition that is rising in many quarters to the Boy's Brigade on account of its military tendency brings into prominence a newer method of reaching out and banding together boys, based upon the idea of chivalry, but not involving the military feature.
>
> The plan is to gather the boys together in churches and other religious institutions into "Castles" and to imitate by the use of titles, badges, ceremonials, etc., the stately court of the round table of King Arthur.

[224] T. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 109.

The point was to emphasize temperance and religious purity in a congenial fashion.[225]

It should come as no surprise that the very religiously inclined Lindsay seized upon the vocabulary of the day, using the same chivalric metaphors other major writers were using, from Clements to Wagner and Yeats. *The Golden Book* was immersed in the language of chivalry. And for Lindsay that was not passé. The idea of chivalry carried with it a statement of Christian virtue. Chivalry carried multiple entendres, simultaneously. It did not refer only to women, as Lindsay might have you believe. It referred to religion, the millennium, gender, race (insofar as Arthur was claimed as Anglo-Saxon), class (nobility), wizards (Merlin), justice and virtue. For our purposes, it was no accident that the Arthurian saga hinged on infidelity. Chivalry meant many things. It was not a simple statement.

In contrast to the popular beliefs of the time, Lindsay portrayed some racially unexpected categories as valued and benevolent, American Indians for example, recalling Lindsay's Indian heritage. As would be expected, both gender and racial roles followed a biblical pattern, race and miscegenation setting apart the regenerate from the damned. The battle for Reconstruction depicted in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* was cast on a more grand and international stage. *The Golden Book* modeled America, but it was an America acting unilaterally, a first among equals, creating a new world order. At its core, the book promoted a millennial philosophy, depicting American exceptionalism on an *international* plane. So, in a sense, *Birth of a Nation* came to be presented as the model for the world.

[225] "The Knights of King Arthur." *The Union-Signal* (February 26, 1895): 6.

The plot revolved around the upstart Asian Buddhist nations failing to understand their place as part of a global community of nations. The Asian nations, as represented by Singapore, reached for oligarchy and aristocracy as opposed to the Anglo-European world's more egalitarian, democratic, position. And it was the righteous, Christian, largely female American soldiers who set the world to rights once again. Non-combatant that he was, having no experience with the magnitude of the horror, Lindsay depicted war abstractly, metaphorically, and largely off stage. Warfare for Lindsay was depicted as a moral conflict rather than a physical struggle.

Lindsay's major characters seemingly all returned alive and unharmed from the war, and the American communities avoided any social or material ill effects because, after all, the war had been fought "over there." Though the war, victory, and eventual validation of democratic ideals were portrayed on an international scale, and though military processions, composed of ranked thousands on horseback, were described again and again in the text, descriptions of pitched battles were entirely lacking. When people died in the text it was the result of mob violence, lynching, acts of God—or the result of drug crazed women with knives, a variation on the *Judith of Bethulia* theme, which could also be read as an act of God. The American army seemed to have been composed mostly of women on horseback, armed with sabers. The Asian enemy sported ray-guns. As a symbol, the female American soldiers depicted honor and fidelity. White female American soldiers did not engage in unacceptable miscegenation.[226] This was the

[226] All American soldiers in the novel seem to be white, but Lindsay expanded the category of white-American to include American Indians, the various peoples devoted to Catholicism, and Jews.

highlight of the contrast between white and Asian. Asian women in the text were not so scrupulous regarding miscegenation.

The theme of world war, and particularly a race war with Asia, was common in the literature of Lindsay's day. Jack London published his "Unparalleled Invasion" in 1906, in which the western world defeated the Chinese juggernaut by way of biological warfare, achieving the complete genocide of that race. H. G. Wells's *The War in the Air* (1907) depicted a German-Asian alliance that pummeled America, as if America were just any mongrel race. George England's *Darkness and Dawn* (1912) was not as specifically anti-Asian as London's text. New York finds itself destroyed, and the white survivors turn on their misshapen mongrel conquers. Homer Lea's *The Valor of Ignorance* (1909) projected a successful Japanese invasion of the West Coast, and the collapse of the eastern United States into oligarchy. In J. U. Giesy's *All for His Country* (1915), there was a domino effect paralleling the international politics of the day. Mexicans invaded the American southwest, followed by an American counter attack and incursion into Mexico, which drew Mexico's allies, the Japanese into the war, the Japanese subsequently invading America. Peter Kyne's *Pride of Palomar* (1921) demonstrated the effect of an army disguised as immigrant Japanese laborers, who rose in an attempt to exterminate the whites of California. As with so many texts of the day, subversive, grasping, morally deficient Asians rising against the rule of virtuous Anglo-Saxons was the theme of Lindsay's *Golden Book* (238).

Lindsay's text always suggested there was a racial distinction to be made between the Japanese, Chinese, Javanese, and Americans. The Asians of the "Cocaine Buddha"

come from Singapore and Malaysia, and as the use of cocaine would suggest, they were portrayed as corrupt. But even so, there was no suggestion they wanted to exterminate the white race, just dominate and intermarry, which was the theme of the *Pride of Palomar*, in which the Japanese desired intermarriage.

Race was always an issue in America, but particularly so in the years of World War I, as evidenced by the race riots that broke out in Washington, D.C.; Longview, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska; and Knoxville, Tennessee in the summer of 1919. The rioting of 1919 was even more intense than the race riots of 1917 had been.[227] Race war was the theme of the day, implicit in the Zimmerman Telegram, where the Germans offered an alliance and support for Mexico if the Mexicans would take up arms against America.

Booker T. Washington, seemingly, addressed this same topic in 1898. He spoke at a Spanish-American War jubilee celebration in Chicago, saying: "I make no empty statement when I say that we shall have a cancer gnawing at the heart of the republic that shall one day prove as dangerous as an attack with an army without or within." [228] Not only was race war a compelling issue, weighing on the public psyche; it was a theme tied to Lindsay's interests. We saw in our discussion of *The Art of the Moving Picture* that Lindsay wrote:

> If you go to a motion pictures and feel yourself suddenly gripped by the highest dramatic tension, as on the old stage, and reflect afterward that it was a fight between only two or three men in a room otherwise empty,

[227] Ronald C. White, *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel (1877-1925)* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), 248.
[228] Booker T. Washington, The Story of My Life and Work (Toronto, 1990), 248-58.

> stop to analyze what they stood for. They were probably representatives of groups or races that had been pursuing each other earlier in the film. Otherwise the conflict, however violent, appealed mainly to the sense of speed" (47).

Lindsay assumed racial conflict.

The heroes of Lindsay's text were portrayed as rugged individualists tied to family groupings. Viewed from a century's distance, this emphasis on rugged individualism and small group behavior seems pathetically naive, but that was a major part of the message to be gleaned from Lindsay's text. Individuality, the primacy of face to face interaction, real (viable) choice as opposed to the appearance of choice, and an individual's ability to make a difference were not just clichés to Lindsay; they were believed. Lindsay populated his novel with multitudes of characters who interacted on a first name basis. His was not a world of superficial acquaintance. He believed *in* a community, but that community was largely one he was excluded from. That was what he worked for, and that was a core message of his text. There was division by race, but there was also a sense of acceptance, a separate but equal world view.

Consensus and persuasion defined community in Lindsay's novel. Force, within the community, was simply moral persuasion, applied. Little blood was spilled in the pages of the text, though there was a lot of martial activity, and a successfully fought world war. The sense of *The Golden Book of Springfield* was antithetical to the world view of Erving Goffman's *Asylums* (1959), Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977), or Robert D. Putnam's

Bowling Alone (2000), where individuals served only as minor cogs in a much larger machine. Lindsay argued one *could* stand in opposition to multitudes, that the individual did matter. Small group networking *did* work. Moral certainty was an existential reality, for Lindsay. The very fact that Lindsay's text was so poorly received as to be almost invisible after World War I, the fact that one of the most popular poets of the day could have fallen off the cultural map so quickly and completely, bespeaks a sea change sweeping everything before it. Lindsay's pet program, Prohibition, or temperance, failed in the 1920s and 1930s. President Coolidge could see God as a factory. The advertising executive, Bruce Barton, could see Christ as a political businessman. And once they had been to Paris, Americans were not so content on the farm anymore. Lindsay's work rests atop the sea changes in economics, community, religion, and belief brought on by the War. *The Golden Book of Springfield* projected an American ideal of a united worldview under God that had already been badly tarnished by 1920, the year of its publication.

In some ways Lindsay was very liberal, religiously. He praised most all of the major saints, Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant, in his novel. And Lindsay's idea of a "saint" was very much in line with Emerson's concept of "The Poet." A poet could be someone who lived a good life, or was exemplary in some way, hence Lindsay's fascination with Abraham Lincoln, Johnny Appleseed, and Confucius, men whom Lindsay wrote of with a religious fervor. But religion in America at the turn of the twentieth century also carried with it the connotation of race.

Catholic immigrants to America, the Irish, Italians, and Poles (among others), were seen as racially undesirable. We've seen how Lindsay portrayed black Africans as

inclined to voodoo in "The Congo." And of course, proper Anglo-Saxons were Protestants. Lindsay's major dichotomy in the text was both religious *and* racial. The two coincided. The adherents of the "Cocaine Buddha" were defined as both Asian and antithetical to America. As in "The Golden-Faced People," Asians stood as a transparent metaphor for blacks. Among other things, cocaine is a sexual stimulant. In "The Congo" where blacks were associated with drunkenness, here (implicitly) they were also associated with drugs. William James and Stephen Johnson, in *Doin' Drugs* (1996), remind us that temperance was as much about sexuality as alcohol.

> The temperance movement was rooted in nationalism—a belief that self-control was essential for the country. . . , that the movement against saloons and drinking would eliminate prostitution and crime. However, in the South the movement was affected by the racist belief that Prohibition was needed as a means of preventing interracial sex.[229]

Much the same scenario can be found in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), where Marija explains how drugs, alcohol and interracial sex drive the system of white slavery and prostitution.[230] So, drunkenness is associated with sex; cocaine is associated with sex, and miscegenation is *the* evil to be avoided.

Cocaine, much like alcohol, was associated with blacks. In an oft quoted article

---

[229] William James and Stephen L. Johnson, *Doin' Drugs: Patterns of African American Addiction* (Austin: University of Texas press, 1996), 15.

[230] Marija speaks of the importation of women from all over the world to Chicago, for the purpose of prostitution, and she specifically addresses black and white unions. Sinclair has Marija speak of French women as being "the worst of all, except for the Japanese" (297). Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 295-97.

by Dr. Edward Huntington Williams, "Negro Cocaine 'Fiends' New Southern Menace" (1915), black people were portrayed as being unusually susceptible to addiction, and hence, violence. Williams argued that under the influence of cocaine blacks were able to shoot better, allowing them to drop five men, dead, one for each cartridge.[231] A physician, Christopher Koch, in a *Literary Digest* article in 1914, argued that "most attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of the cocaine-crazed Negro brain."[232]

On the other hand, the use of opium and heroin were most often attributed to the Chinese. In a pamphlet usually attributed to Samuel Gompers, *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion* (1901), we see the explicit connection between the two:

> The stranger in San Francisco is often struck with a type of humanity never seen elsewhere. Passing through the upper end of Kearney street [*sic*], in the vicinity of Chinatown, after nightfall one may see any number of what were once men and women, but are now but mental and physical wrecks of humanity. Gaunt and emaciated, with a death-like skin hanging loosely over their frame, eyes deep sunk in their cavities furtively glancing from side to side … they slink along the strees [*sic*], like hunted animals … Some time in the past these poor miserable and degraded wrecks were the beloved children of fond parents, who perhaps builded [*sic*] upon their bright prospects, but are now hopelessly lost to them forever … They have

[231] Edward Huntington Williams, "Negro Cocaine 'Fiends' New Southern Menace." *New York Times* (February 8, 1914): Section 5, p. 12.
[232] Christopher Koch, *Literary Digest* (March 28, 1914): 687.

> become … opium fiends … In some manner, by some wily method they have been induced by the Chinese to use the drug [opium].[233]

In creating the religion of the "Cocaine Buddha" as the antithesis of his novel, Lindsay brought race, drugs, and religion together as racial stereotypes. And he did so in a way that allowed the audience to read the novel as a commentary on race in America, black and white in the guise of the yellow peril. Asians standing in lieu of blacks allowed Lindsay to draw two racial metaphors, while deftly disarming Joel Springarn's charge of insensitivity to matters of black racial equality, a charge Spingarn had published in the pages of *The Crisis* (1917).[234]

From the first page, *The Golden Book* reads like a screenplay, which probably reveals the novel's creative origins. The first page is devoted to a list of characters, much as one might find in film credits. For our purposes the interesting part of these credits is that two of the characters are identified by race, "Nathan Levi, a Jewish boy, becomes Rabbi Terrance Ezekiel," and "Daisy Pearl Johnson, a negress, becomes Mary Timmons" (1).[235] Mary Timmons only sparingly appears after this introduction. An appreciation of the half-hearted nature of black inclusion in the community of the novel is hard to miss. Unless one wishes to expand the category "black" to include Irish, Asian, Indian, and

---

[233] Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labor, *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism: Which Shall Survive?* (Washington: American Federation of Labor, 1901), 28-29.

[234] Joel E. Spingarn, "Editorial: A Letter and an Answer." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* (January 1917: 114.

[235] In the introductions of these names and characters, Lindsay inserts his friends and acquaintances into the text, changing their names to fictionalize them. This serves a two fold purpose. On the one hand Lindsay demonstrated the racially diverse nature of his friends and acquaintances for the readership. On the other, the novel was supposed to be a foretelling of the future; so, Mary Timmons becomes the ancestor or great granddaughter of Daisy Pearl Johnson in the text.

Southern European, black Americans do not populate the pages of the novel to any great extent, or at least not explicitly so.

In the first chapter of Lindsay's text, subtitled "The Cambellite, The Florist, And The Hostess," we see the expected images of Lindsay's style, artistry, and intent. Lindsay's primary assumption in anything he wrote was Christianity. He explained in the first chapter the Cambellite injunction to embrace Christianity in all of its forms. So, the assumption was Christianity as a universal. A protestant Cambelite concept of Christianity carried the implication of community, small group, face-to-face interaction. This was also one of Lindsay's prime messages, community as a human endeavor and not the process of a faceless human mass.

Lindsay defined his perspective as "Southern," cited the beauty of the Mason Dixon line, and in a very revealing fashion complemented the "great hostess of Springfield, Eloise Terry," not for her intelligence, morality, or political acumen, but for the facts that she dressed well and wisely chose to be born blonde. "Her distinction, in my eyes, is not her opinions, but the fact that she dresses in schemes allied to the gold of her hair" (9). We have a statement of both race and gender. In the novel, Lindsay presented a reality, and in this reality he communicated to us not only what should be, but who should be, and why. All of the characters in the first chapter were white. For a chapter emphasizing a Christian message that pretended to universality, this was a significant statement.

Lindsay introduced his pantheon of heroes in the first chapter: Christ, Socrates, St. Francis, Swedenborg, and Johnny Appleseed. We are told Johnny Appleseed "fought

the wilderness, not the Indian" (7). This will also be a prominent theme in the text, Indians as racially acceptable, as honorary whites. Lindsay tells his readers that his father's side of the family traced a line of descent through the Indians (xxxii). The American white/Indian hybrids become a major symbolic motif in the novel. Lindsay was demonstrating that some forms of miscegenation were permissible. He was demonstrating that Indians, and his family tree, could be perceived as white. However, it was also made very clear in the novel that other forms of miscegenation, those that combined white and black, led to what might be called "abominations," recalling Thomas Carlyle's perspective of miscegenation.

Lindsay was a broad-brush philosopher. He was not looking for definitional exactitude, but his symbolism was fairly consistent. It was no accident that Lindsay introduced socialism in the first chapter of *The Golden Book*, "Christian Socialism," as a way to redress "[t]his reasonable, non-miraculous millennium" (6). It is always difficult to know what Lindsay meant by "socialism." But this is also understandable in so far as the topic was so fraught with political peril in the immediate aftermath of World War I, when *The Golden Book* was published. The Palmer Raids, the red scares, and the rise of the second Klan all converged between 1915 and 1920.[236]

Attorney General Mitchell Palmer began the Palmer raids in the summer of 1919 in response to rising socialist and labor agitation, raiding "the Russian Soviet Bureau[,] a

[236] A quick contemporary overview of the red scare, the Espionage Act of June 1917, and the forces leading to the Sedition Act of 1918, can be found in John Reed's "One Solid Month of Liberty" in the September 1917 edition of *The Masses*.

would-be Soviet Embassy," and the offices of the International Workers of the World.[237] A Bolshevik revolution in the United States was considered a possibility at the time, and the Lusk committee on anti-sedition found that "black Americans were among the preferred groups that agitators sought to enlist in the upcoming revolt" (Kennedy 289). Palmer acted quickly and brutally to deport any aliens associated with socialist organizations. He was supported in his efforts, by, among others, the Ku Klux Klan.[238] By 1919 labor actions tended to be labeled "plots to establish communism" (Kennedy 289-91).

Lindsay's outspoken promotion of Christian socialism can be seen as a fairly courageous position to have taken at the time. Lindsay never defined socialism in any concrete sense, but he did refer back to the concept repeatedly, explicitly, and metaphorically, if at arm's length. In the first chapter he introduced his topics; that socialism appears in the first chapter was no accident. "Karl Marx" appeared explicitly in Chapter Three, and the unthinking defamation of the "Reds" was a topic of Chapter Two (11, 27). Socialism, at the end of the 1800s, was understood to be connected to the politics of immigration, and hence ethnicity.[239]

Everyone would have understood the connection between race, immigration, and socialism at the turn of the 1900s. One of Lindsay's most famous, and earliest, poems was "The Eagle that is Forgotten," a eulogy for John Altgeld, the Illinois Governor who

---

[237] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 289.
[238] In *The Golden Book*, Lindsay's spelling of "Ku Klux Klan" varied. However, this was one variation.
[239] Harry Barnard, *Eagle Forgotten: The Life of John Peter Altgeld* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1938), 25.

freed the Haymarket rioters, those who had survived immediate execution.[240] It is no accident *Eagle Forgotten* (1938), by Harry Barnard, was the title of what is still considered one of the best of Altgeld's biographies. Harry Barnard also noted that at the end of the 1800s,

> 'the seeds of socialist agitation were being sown in Chicago, carried on the tide of German immigration that poured into the city since '48. Wild-eyed anarchism would spring out of this. Note, too, another movement, already well-entrenched in Chicago: the resurgence of nativistic Know-nothingism, making a cleavage between 'foreigners' and 'Americans.' Voicing the slogan 'Put None but Americans on Guard,' the nativists elected a mayor of Chicago, one Levi Daniel Boone, and produced riots (25).

Altgeld was German born. It would have been very difficult for Lindsay, or anyone else in that day and age, to miss the foreign, Altgeld, socialist, racial, connection. And *The Golden Book of Springfield*'s "new economic remedy for the world" mirrored the Haymarket socialists' rage against the machine (27).

One of the *Golden Book's* extended, exemplary, families, the Michaels, worked with their hands; they were blacksmiths in small family owned shops. One of the distinctions Lindsay brought forth in depicting the Michaels was the damage factories

[240] The Haymarket riot began on May 4th, 1886, as a May Day celebration. Philip Foner reported May Day celebrations were traditionally mounted in support of workers rights. And Chicago was a caldron of class agitation at the time (27-39). Philip S. Foner, "The First May Day and the Haymarket Affair." *May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday: 1886-1986* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 36-39.

brought to communities. The Michaels worked in small family groups, producing skilled, finished, forges, swords, and plows, among other things, and they had a sense of pride in their workmanship. The Michaels were tacitly compared to the unthinking minions of the "Cocaine Buddha." Individualism within the sense of a welcoming community was a core theme in *The Golden Book*. Community, the good of all, was the sense one could draw from socialism. The socialist underpinnings to *The Golden Book of Springfield* were explicit, if often developed obliquely.

Two decades into the twentieth-century, Lindsay projected an America both corrupted by money and lacking religion, which is why the "Cocaine Buddha" was seen as such a threat. Lindsay's character John Fletcher was put forth as the epitome of the modern American, one who was religious only "on Sunday. . . from eleven til twelve-thirty."

> [Fletcher's] general assumption is:—politics is business and business is politics. . . , and that the Emancipation Proclamation was sent forth into the world to establish more thoroughly the lackey, the toady, the tuft hunter, the snob, the bootlicker, and the parasite, in the service of the stupidest holders of money and land (10-11).

And Fletcher believed that anyone who disagreed with his perspective was "a red," with ideas "imported from the shameful streets of Russia" (11-12). The implication of the red scare and Attorney General Palmer's confrontationist tactics in removing unwanted foreign nationals can be seen here.

In Chapter Two, Lindsay introduced Jews as primarily tied to the profits of the pawn shop, with the expectation this will change with the culmination of the coming spiritual "revolution" (16). And Mary Timmons was introduced as the "Springfield Negress," Daisy Pearl Johnson, who "is 'black but comely'" (17). A very talented woman, indeed, to be able to overcome such a pigmented limitation: "black but comely." Another talented woman, mentioned by implication, was Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), founder of the Christian Science movement. The narrator was portrayed as an adherent of Christian Science (34). So, New Harmony, Christian Science, and socialism lay the foundation for a spiritual, community-based, reorientation of the world.

Mary Timmons was presented in her Baptist Evangelical church, and seemingly her real creative talents, and the talents of her race were both song—"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" was specifically mentioned—and oratory (36-38). Billy Sunday made his appearance, both metaphorically and literally, as a model for the pugilistic conversion of dissidents, "[smashing] the face of everyone who does not submit to our dogmas about Hell" (17, 39). And Hunter Kelly, another major character in the novel, was introduced as "an Irish Catholic boy" who "became an ardent disciple of. . . Johnny Appleseed" (41). Jews, blacks, and Catholics were welcome within this new revolutionary movement, which embraced socialism, evangelicalism, the spiritualism of Mary Baker Eddy, and the community based cooperative philosophy of Robert Owens.

In the guise of the narrator, Lindsay also wrote allusions to himself into the novel. Usually these references were humorous and mildly depreciatory. In writing about those who opposed the new world order, those who opposed the preeminence of religious

belief, Lindsay noted (of his metaphorical self), “For he treats the holy ones for all varieties of nervous disorder, epilepsy, and the like. He is quite sure Christ and Mohammed were epileptics, and that settles it with all such foolishness” (48). The implication being, if Christ and Mohammed were epileptics, then Lindsay could have done much worse than model himself to their image. The text is very much a political effort to redefine white in a more inclusive way. With the inclusion of epileptics and American Indians in his new world view, Lindsay attempted to redefine his own place within the community.

Chapter Four introduced the blacksmith and the blade. Most of the coming world war will apparently be decided at the point of a sword, rather than the barrel of a gun. Lindsay’s fictional Joseph Bartholdi Michael was the patriarch of this blacksmith clan; the historical Bartholdi was the artist who created the Statue of Liberty, bearing Emma Lazarus’s inscription from “The New Colossus:” “Send us your tired and hungry.” Lazarus’s poem was meant to depict Jewish attempts to escape the Russian pogroms. The Statue itself portrayed a female defender of Liberty, a theme Lindsay embraced in the person of his heroine, Avanel. The Statue of Liberty was erected as a tribute to the common “man” through the efforts of common Americans. Both the Government and the wealthy refused to contribute to the construction of the Statue, delaying its completion a full decade, from the centennial of 1876 to 1886. It was no accident that the names Joseph Bartholdi and Michael were combined, the names illustrating Lindsay’s millennial intent. The Archangel Michael was responsible for carrying the battle to Satan, for the coming of Armageddon, and hence, for the millennium (Daniel 12:1-13).

The Michaels believed in a separate but equal ethnicity, and were one of the two primary clans in Lindsay's novel. As the name Michael suggested, they represented the righteousness of God, and they will take their belief to the world at the point of a sword.

Lindsay's was a *world* perspective. He addressed immigration, race and wealth as ongoing problems. What was really happening in the text and the chapter was a demonstration of an idea found in Jean Crevecour's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), the philosophy of Thomas Carlyle as demonstrated by Cromwell's ultimatum to the Irish at Drogheda, and Israel Zangwell's play *The Melting Pot* (1908-1909). Immigrants were expected to melt into the fabric of American life. For Lindsay the implication was that race and ethnicity would cease to be an issue in time, once everyone (in the world) became sufficiently Americanized.

Joseph Bartholdi Michael becomes the blacksmith who tempered, shaped and created the new swords, each handcrafted, each—metaphorically—carrying the "new truth" forward; these new handmade swords became the armaments that would decide the next great war. The progeny of Bartholdi became The Horse Shoe Brotherhood, reminiscent of the Virginia colony's Knights of the Golden Horseshoe (1716)—again the chivalrous theme—and the Michael Amazons. The female soldiers were "[i]nspired by the Amazons of the Russian Revolution" (Lindsay *Golden* 51). The daughters of Bartholdi, symbolically the children of the Statue of Liberty, became the primary military symbol and force in the novel. And it was no accident they were tied to the female soldiers of the Russian Revolution. There was an imbedded image in the text, which was not made explicit, but which was illustrated time and again. The symbol for the Russian

Revolution was the hammer and sickle. The symbol for house Bartholdi was the hammer and anvil (57). Lindsay never drew this association tight, but it is difficult to miss the revolutionary implication.

The Singaporeans were identified as the new adversaries in the coming world war, and their moral place in the greater scheme of things was cemented by the comparison to the "demon ambition. . . [of] the Germans of 1914" (56). In a letter to Katharine Bates, dated August, 1918, Lindsay explained the imagery and intent of the *Golden Book of Springfield*:

> . . . I have tried to develop the logical great American artistic and religious and political State Capital, never departing I hope from the real American mood to indulge in abstract socialistic speculation. In my book I am making every kind of direct and indirect war upon Germanism and hyphenism. . . . I assume a secession movement and a secession doctrine, coming from the mythical city of Singapore, which plays about the same game of rebellion against international good will that Germany does today and Japan seems to threaten to do. I draw parallels from these two nations and the Southern Confederacy in sketching the Singapore rebellion, which attempts to lead off all Asia from the International Middle Class government. Note, the *middle* class. I hold that it is the fundamental tendency of civilization to bring all men to the despised middle class conditions, and the only practical international government will be a middle class institution. . . . In short the class war hypothesis is a thing I

> utterly reject. . . . I see the international government as a thing inevitable as the sunrise, the *middle class international* that will pull down the Emperors and the millionaires and police the earth (Chenetier 167, 169).[241]

So, a class war after all. Race was to be the embedded metaphor defining the villains.

The leader of the Michael Amazons was identified as Avanel Boone, and the Boones were a crossbred clan made up of white and red, but depicted as dark haired, light skinned, Indians: the melting pot, again, but also an idea reminiscent of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, American exceptionalism as derived from the unique American experience on the frontier. Lindsay was arguing miscegenation on the frontier, a melting pot of crossbreeds, but only some crossbreeds were welcome.

Retreating to one of our literary conventions, names mean something, when one saw the name Joseph Bartholdi Michael, one was meant to understand. . . something. Certainly we have identified the connection to the Statue of Liberty, but that was only part of the intent. Joseph was a biblical name for one who is banished, a prodigal son metaphor, and also the father of Christ; Michael was the avenging angel of the Bible: Two Christian, anglicized, names sandwiching "Bartholdi." We have a representation of an immigrant who has accepted the Anglicization process and become American. He has changed his name, without the use of a hyphen. So, we have the outcast become the avenging angel in support of American ideals.

Boone, of course, which will be the patronym for another of the novel's American clans, was obviously meant to communicate the decent from Daniel Boone. The

[241] "Hyphenism" refers to the new American immigrants who have refused to set aside their original names and cultures.

Singaporeans will be foreign by definition (hence unAmerican), and the allies of the Singaporians, the enemies of the Michaels and the Boones, will be the Kusukos, and Kopenskys, unrepentantly Slavic—un-American—names. The language carries within it its own understood, known, categories. And if there were any doubt, Lindsay sometimes reinforced the message by adding declarative nick names, such as "Slick Slack" Kopensky, in identifying the Mayor, and "Crawling Jim" Kopensky, in identifying the son (160-61). Wherever there might be doubt as to the ethnic intent of a name, it is usually explicitly clarified in the text, Surto Hurdenburg, as we will see, becoming a case in point. The name itself was clearly un-American, but the point Lindsay would make from the name was how undesirable immigrants could be assimilated (178-80).[242]

The plot of *The Golden Book* revolved around ethnic conflict. The book set out to answer the questions: "Who is a true American?" And, "what constitutes an authentic American identity?" In purposively highlighting the suffix, "sky," Lindsay made obvious reference to Slavic, Catholics and Jews. Steven Ross, in *Working-Class Hollywood* (1998), wrote that the "Eastern European foreigners" were often depicted in film as insane or erratic. "Their female counterparts dress in male clothes and look like 'modern' women but decidedly unfeminine." The purpose in identifying Slavic characters by dress and name was to highlight the foreign, "inappropriate European

[242] In Lindsay's day, in the aftermath of World War I, the implication of having a German name would have required *little* clarification. Lindsay often referred to either famous Americans, or his personal friends, in the novel, such as his friend Edgar Lee Masters of *The Spoon River Anthology* fame. In these instances one really just has to recognize the name, within the context, in order to understand the intent. Ralph Adams Cram was mentioned within the context of holy places (127). "Cram" as a name sounds pejorative; however, knowing Ralph Cram was a contemporary of Lindsay's, an architect, and a proponent of the American Gothic, identifies Cram as an artist and hero. Gothic to Lindsay would have meant "religion." Lindsay referred to many famous people of the day in his text, including Frank Lloyd Wright (173).

ideas," they bought with them.[243] Lindsay could have chosen Irish immigrant names, Scotch immigrant names, English immigrant names, but he didn't. For one of the main villains in the text, he chose a name that will not only carry the sense of "immigrant" and "erratic" but also carried a pejorative religious connotation: Catholic. Kopensky, as villain, was no less a metaphor than the hero Black Hawk Boone.

Surto Hurdenburg, though having a very small part in the novel, might be classed as one of the text's most important tragic heroes. He represented ethnicity. A new immigrant to America, he became the model for how foreigners were to become acclimatized, a social demonstration of how America transmutes lead to gold. Surto is a Malay name. So, Surto comes from a country which can be considered antagonistic, and will become America's major adversary in the coming war. Hurdenburg is sufficiently German to draw the connection back to WWI and the German immigrants in America. We have a metaphor, and, unlike many of Lindsay's plot lines, this is a metaphor which will be well developed. Ultimately, *The Golden Book* represented Lindsay's vision for America at the end of World War I, and Hurdenburg demonstrated how even drunken immigrants could become proper Americans.

"Blue-faced" Surto is introduced as a hopeless "derelict" (Lindsay *Golden* 178). Lindsay defined a derelict as one "left behind in the race, generally degenerate sons and daughters of old settlers" (176-78). The use of race here is a double entendre, carrying the meaning of black and white and how some have been left behind. Those left behind were the "exploited," possessing no skills, having been excluded from the "educational

[243] Steven J. Ross, *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press: 1998), 65.

machinery" (176-77). These unskilled laborers were classed with the "defectives," "drug fiends," and "outlaws" (176). The idea in the text was to rehabilitate these outcastes, creating model members of the society. And the first step in this process was to take the oath, a pledge of allegiance if you will.

Surto pledged to "support the Constitution of the World Government, the Constitution of the United States, and Laws of Illinois, [and] the Ordinances of Springfield." Surto swore to obey "the moral laws of the community," respecting his neighbors' rights and his own duty to his fellow man. And, he was not only to learn the skills with which he would employ himself, he was to become a "member of a guild." He would vote, study civic reform, "examining at all times the opinions of clean-minded radical citizens and acting on them according to the dictates of my conscience." He would assiduously avoid "motion-picture shows, dance halls, bad women, alcohol and drugs, and will specifically denounce "the traffic in Singaporean cocaine." Surto would form himself to the expectations of the community to the point that his conscience will reflect those values. This oath or pledge was put forth in the manner of a religious rite (178-80). Surto swore to obey the law, become a member of a union, work diligently, study radical reform, obey only his own conscience, avoid film, dance hall women, alcohol, drugs and specifically "Singaporian cocaine." Even Bill Haywood, one of the founding leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World, would have been happy with this as a statement of social intent. However, the idea of [German] immigrants embracing radicalism and acting upon their own recognizance was what sent the Haymarket agitators to the gallows.

Speaking in his own defense, Haymarket defendant Albert Parsons pointed out that the Pinkerton men, who held and arrested him, had little to do with temperance.[244] Use of alcohol was supposed to be one of the defining characteristics of "degenerate" immigrants. "Blue-faced" Surto (the degenerate) was meant to carry the connotation "drunkard" (Lindsay *The Golden Book* 197). Comparative hypocrisy was Lindsay's point. In the text he argued the American moneyed aristocracy of *The Golden Book* had little to do with morality; small wonder he would come to that conclusion in the age of robber barons, the Palmer raids, and the attempts to crush both the unions and socialism in the aftermath of World War I, Lindsay having served on the Board of Max Eastman's socialist journal *The Masses*.

In many ways the oath Surto takes outlines his assimilation process and suggested the work of the Salvation Army. The context of Surto's activities carried a semi-religious quality to it, what Lindsay referred to as civic religion.[245] Lindsay cast both Catholicism

---

[244] Leon Stein and Philip Taft, Editors, *The Accused and the Accusers: The Famous Speeches of the Eight Chicago Anarchists in Court* (New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), 143.

[245] Robert Bellah in "Civil Religion in America" (1967) addressed much the same concept as Lindsay's civic religion. Bellah argued there was an overriding faith and sense of moral order permeating America. It was a nondenominational, not in itself Christian, sense of justice and mission guiding the leaders and philosophers of America, "especially the first few presidents" (175). As an example of the nondenominational non-Christian perspective on civil religion, Bellah reported Dwight Eisenhower as having said: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is" (170). Lindsay would not have agreed with that sense of civil religion. Lindsay was biblically oriented, and the villain of *The Golden Book* was Buddhist, leading to a religious world war in the novel. Bellah makes it very clear this would be an example where "civil religion has not always been invoked in favor of worthy causes" (181-82). However, Lindsay did address one of Bellah's issues and concerns. In *The Golden Book*, Lindsay made the attempt to extend the democratic republic to the world in the aftermath of World War I. Bellah referred to that as one time where our civil religion failed us, where "we turned out backs" on the world (184). Lindsay clearly made a literary effort to extend his sense of civic religion to the world in the aftermath of that War, though he did advocat both a biblical and denominational world view. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

and Judaism in his novel in a Protestant vein. This paralleled the perspective of Thomas Carlyle. There was to be a core religion uniting the community, but the tenets or specifics of that religion did not matter so much as the fact that there *was* a core religion. So Lindsay was synthesizing a religion, with heavy Protestant overtones, to unite a country and community, and eventually the world. In this sense religion was associated with the concept of American exceptionalism. The text suggested a crusade to change the world, and that was the purpose of the coming (fictional) world war. It was really a world revolution that was taking place, reminiscent of the American Civil War. The North (America) was going to set the Southern (Malay) aristocracy to rights. Hence, there was also a "saved" and "damned" quality to this scenario, the foreign, Malay, aristocratic contingent obviously representing the damned.

Surto, on the other hand, represented one of the converted. And he set about the process of proselytizing, working to convert more of the damned to Christian, temperance, democratic (American) thinking, converting dedicated aliens to a more racially friendly philosophical perspective, a perspective analogous to *How the Irish Became White* (1996). Part of the lesson in Noel Ignatiev's text was in learning to define black, enforcing that status. And this was what got Surto lynched.

Surto attempted to break up a lascivious "yellow" drunken dance hall binge, "and at the very sight of the 'puritan' Hurdenburg, [the patrons] turn to beasts" (209-10). The revelers had been arguing for a "vigilance committee" and condemning those who neither drink nor value wealth:

> What the 'holy city of Springfield needs is a committee to hang with ropes all people who attempt to regulate the religion or the habits of their neighbors.' By religion, Jim [Kopensky] probably means the Singaporian religion but does not stress that point (210).

The revelers hanged Surto, left him hanging there, and went "back to the hall undisturbed" (211).

The implication of Jim Kopensky's denunciation, and the subsequent lynching of Surto, was that not all religions had an equal right to life in the Springfield of 2018. Surto's actions demonstrated Lindsay's perspective that only *some* religions had a right to survive, and that others need to be rooted out. A tenuous distinction was being made between the civil religion of the New Springfield of 2018 and the religion of the green glass Buddha. Surto had a "puritanical" right to disrupt and denounce the activities of those allied with the Singaporeans and the "Cocaine Buddha." Interfering with and denouncing the activities of the wealthy "immoral" was all right. Resistance to that moral order and subsequent lynching was not.

"Kopensky," as a Slavic name, among other things, would have carried the connotation of Judaism or Catholicism. Lindsay would not have objected to either sect. He *would* have objected to any culture's tolerance for alcohol or drugs, which was what was represented here. Having noted Lindsay's ongoing temperance work, noting *The Golden Book* hammered opposition to dance halls, drug use, and drunkenness, which were activities usually associated with immigrants, Lindsay could be seen to be making a distinction between un-American and naturalized American behavior, a distinction that

encouraged radical and autonomous political beliefs, while excluding those who promoted the use of drugs and alcohol.[246] A subtlety Lindsay included in his text was the temperance crusade against caffeine. "Coffee house Kusuko" was a reference to one of the men allied with the yellow dance halls and the man from Singapore (292). The Woman's Christian Temperance Union banned *both* caffeine and alcohol.[247] It was clear in Lindsay's novel that coffee was associated with unsavory activity; however, the narrator found no harm in imbibing. Lindsay did not blindly adopt any regime.

Surto gave his life for the new American civil religion. And though everyone knew who was involved in the lynching, no one was prosecuted.[248] Everyone knew that the prohibited public sale of alcohol was casually ignored (212-13). And the crisis between the religions of wealth and licentiousness, and the religion of abstention, was reaching a breaking point.

Lindsay viewed religion as embedded in everything. Perhaps it would be better to say God was embedded in everything. This was the perspective of the ideal society Lindsay depicted in *The Golden Book*. However, there was a subtle distinction being made between "we the representatives of God," and "we the (self) chosen," where God or religion became almost an afterthought. Lindsay embraced the idea of an American civil religion that anyone could be a part of. The implication of that perspective was that "we," Americans, would ultimately become a separate, definitive racial category through

[246] Lindsay repeated in this text the argument he made in *Art of the Moving Picture*, several times, that movie houses represented effective competition to saloons and dance halls (*Golden Book* 182).
[247] Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1923* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 60.
[248] This is the same scenario that played itself out in the Springfield race riots of 1908.

the process of miscegenation. The idea was that this new racial mix would grow to encompass the world, through force of persuasion.

The Kopenskys were seen as evil for promoting lynchings—but also for being wealthy, lascivious, and un-American, among other things. World war, on the other hand, to enforce compliance with righteousness would come to be seen as entirely proper: a war of religion, a race war. The Kopenskys were portrayed as petty and self-serving. The Michaels were portrayed as bringing righteousness to the world. But there seemed little difference between the tactics of the Kokenskys and the Michaels. The only differences seemed to be those of scale, power, and religious preference.

Though there existed the hypothetical possibility of universal social harmony in Lindsay's world view, exclusion and expropriation seem the only means by which this will be brought about, persuasive expropriation if possible, but expropriation by any means if not. Lindsay's message was community, but the only means to achieve community that the nominally pacifist Lindsay could conceive of involved the use of force. Moral persuasion was found wanting. And that was where race came in, for immorality was almost always associated with race in Lindsay's model. Race permeated Lindsay's philosophy, and twist and turn as he might, he couldn't evade it. Because race was infused into everything around him, there was no way to distill it out of the mash. Race, like religion, became the litmus defining "us" and "them." And without "them" there could be no "us."

Lindsay tied religion to race, just as he tied sex to race, which was both biblical *and* Shakespearian. Lindsay wrote,

> The mystery of race is first of all a sex mystery, and with endless subtleties settled by instinct, on which no man can dogmatize, though they have caused jealous Othello to misunderstand and kill Desdemona, and Jessica to understand and wed Lorenzo, from the beginning. If race is first of all a sex mystery, it is next a religious mystery, which is more easily expounded, from the standpoint of politics, and touches, perhaps more clearly, our theory of World Government. . . . The races with a turn for sectarianism, like the Scotch, are still working in our blood while others are the mainstay of the Cathedral (*Golden* 281).[249]

There is "our blood" and the blood of "others." Lindsay specifically tied race to religion. Race has been the issue "from the beginning," as has a Catholic versus Protestant distinction, tied to race in the person of the "Scotch" and the "others of the "Cathedral."

Shakespeare's Othello, the Moor, is usually portrayed as black, and the distinction being made is over the concept of miscegenation. Lindsay made a distinction between "mongrel" cross marriages and acceptable cross marriages: "And Springfieldians, for all their marvelous intermarriages, are not mongrel" (*Golden* 280). Lindsay has laid out the foundations for his identification of racial categories. He has said religion is race and sex is race. Generally speaking, what this meant was that anyone from an acceptable Christian or Western background was to be seen as white. Lindsay almost automatically included American Indians, but not blacks and Asians, within this category of white. However, he also accepted Italians, Scandinavians, and Greeks as white, people who

[249] Thomas Carlyle was Scottish.

would generally have been seen as racially questionable, or undesirable by Americans at the turn of the 1900s. Indians, as the honored dead, were given a kind of honorary inclusion as white, though there were no pure bred Indians mentioned in the text. The Japanese were specifically set apart in "honored separation," as a different racial type. The Japanese were not seen as Christian so they were set apart, though Lindsay obviously approved of them as a people. Religion is race. Sex is race, and the two were to be kept apart (280).

Lindsay spoke at length on race in the novel, making a distinction between categories of Catholics. "Dreaming Catholics," one might interpret this as spiritually inclined Catholics were acceptable, where traditional Catholics, meaning those who obeyed and followed the words of priests, were not. Christian Scientists, a sect which Lindsay defined as being composed of lapsed Congregationalists and Jews, was also an acceptable race or religion. Lindsay suggested that any given religion appeals to only some races, that the religion itself, therefore, was a component of race (282).[250]

So long as any given religion passed muster within a Protestant context, because his ontology presumed race, then even "though [the various religions] appear to contradict one another," they are all grandfathered into a "general principle:—one sect, one vote; one race, one vote" (*Golden* 283). Lindsay was willing to include the Japanese, Mohammedans, and Tibetans as American citizens, or as potential American citizens, though "[o]f course they marry for the most part among themselves" (284).

[250] This is almost a Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis of religion. Instead of language being fraught with culture, religion is determined by the preference inherent in each race. Lindsay was no Benjamin Whorf; Lindsay argued by assertion. Whorf argued by way of logic, example, and demonstration. However, both argued the embedded nature of culture.

> [N]o matter how separate they keep their race strains, or how guarded their family altars and holy family flags, they surely belong to the Springfield race and the Springfield Civic Religion (284-85).

Separate but equal. Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Exposition Address." The very concept of race precluded the idea that members of different races would want to intermarry.

There were some racial boundaries that could not be crossed, though the members of those races might be counted equal within a secular understanding of religion. But in Lindsay's conception of a one world religion, secular equality was back of the bus. It was religious racial equality that counted. Lindsay posited a one world government, Wilson's League of Nations coming to mind, with a slow merging of religious beliefs across national boundaries, so that the Buddhist will eventually stand conjoined with the American. One gets the impression that Lindsay's concept of eventual merger really meant world Christianity. Lindsay ended this treatise on the two strands of race with the observation that so long as there was an ocean between races surely we can all get along (285-86). But of course, Lindsay's text demonstrated that was not the case. Lindsay's world war was a race and religious war fought across the two shores of the Pacific Ocean. In *The Art of the Moving Picture*, Lindsay demonstrated how to assimilate immigrants within the concept of America. In *The Golden Book* Lindsay defined out certain racial types as the unassailable "other."

Lindsay's *Golden* war was almost a mirror image of World War I, the war seen from the perspective of the home front, the war making the world safe for democracy. To

put it another way, Lindsay's concept of war mimicked the conflict found in *Birth of a Nation*, projected on a world scale. World War I can be seen as a war in support of Anglo-Saxon England, a war in opposition to undesirable ethnicities, such as the Germans among others. In *Birth of a Nation*, undesirable ethnicities were found to be corrupting the best of all possible worlds, and the conflict represented the setting the nation to rights once more. In a letter to Jane Addams dated April 9, 1917, we see Lindsay emphasizing his America-first perspective: "I hate a hyphenated American—I hate war" (Chenetier *Letters* 151). In the *Golden Book*, it was the growing influence of undesirable Asian ethnicities in America that triggered a new world war. As was made very clear in the text, intermarriage with Asians was both undesirable and self-destructive. The same message in opposition to miscegenation came through in *Birth of a Nation*. And it was not until 1967 that the Supreme Court legalized interracial marriage, overturning anti-miscegenation laws, in Loving vs. Virginia.[251] Unacceptable miscegenation is *the* evil addressed in *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Through the metaphor of intermarriage, race is tied to morality, ethics, and politics.

In "The Golden-Faced People," Lindsay transposed Asian and black culture in order to address the idea of white slavery. In *The Golden Book of Springfield*, Lindsay seemed to be trying to avoid any additional conflicts with the NAACP or *The Crisis*, and in so doing he worked to almost completely avoid discussion of black culture at all. However, the family of the main antagonist, identified as "The Man from Singapore," had a racial background identified as Malay, and "a peculiar mixture of Anglo Saxon

[251] Jennifer DeVere Brody, "Memory's Movements: Minstrelsy, Miscegenation, and American Race Studies." *American Literary History* (Winter 1999): 738.

remittance man, Chinese banker and Arab trader" (232). The wife and mother's family were identified as the Klings. It is difficult to know who this would refer to because Lindsay wrote both his friends and the well-known personalities of-the-day into the novel. For example, there were several references to Velaska in association with the yellow dance halls; Velaska (sometimes spelled Valeska) Gert was a well known German avant-garde dancer, with a lascivious bent.[252] The fact that she *was* German, lascivious, female, and associated with film suggested Lindsay was both aware of her reputation and purposively used her as a model for un-American activities, a representative of evil, German, foreign, film, immigrant influence. Having a foreign name, names unlike those of the Michaels, Boones and Lindsays, was a red flag.

Sometimes the references are so obscure as to escape identification. The Klings would be a good example. There are references to Andre Kling as a commentator on poison gas during World War I; Kling was also the family name of President Harding's wife. However, because the reference in *The Golden Book* is to Singapore, we have a clue. Kling was a name given to the early Indian immigrants to Singapore. There were several references to "Raffles" in the text (Lindsay *Golden* 247, 254). Sir Thomas

[252] Susan Manning wrote two articles that deal with Veleska, one of which is an untitled review in the *Dance Research Journal* (70). The other, entitled "Interrupted Continuities," can be found in *The Drama Review* (38). The use of "lascivious" is a polite reference here, and reflects a twenty-first century perspective. Lindsay, or any other mid-Western, conservative advocate of religion of that time, would no doubt have taken a much more pejorative view and censured Veleska's art as representative of immorality. Lindsay's portrayal of Veleska as associated with the yellow dance halls represents nothing less than censure. The use of Veleska as a point of reference can be seen as a demonstration of why Masters would say Lindsay couldn't think straight in prose. The image would have represented an arcane reference, which only a handful of intellectuals would have been able to correctly interpret: Veleska as a dance hall entertainer. And intellectuals did not usually encompass Lindsay's target audience. Susan Manning and Melissa Benson, "Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany." *The Drama Review* (Summer 1986): 30-45. Susan Manning, *Dance Research Journal*. Vol. 18 #2: 70-73.

Raffles founded Singapore for the English in 1819, while working for the East Indian Company. In Lindsay's novel, we are told the man from Singapore "had an original Malay strain. But added to that was a peculiar mixture of Anglo-Saxon remittance man, Chinese banker, and Arab trader" (232). B. F. Riley, in *The White Man's Burden* (1910), described the Malay race as known for its "craftiness" (79). Mr. Dillingham in his *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (1907) wrote that the Malay "has primitive, cruel instincts, more like those of the American Indian" (95). We are told that the Arab portion of the multi ethnic background was prone to violence, and that the Klings were prone to the use of cocaine and sexuality (233-34).

The reference to the "Man from Singapore" thus carries the connotation of miscegenation, and demonstrates the effect "mongrel" blood lines have on an individual. Kling was part of the multi-racial family of the novel's anti-hero, the very beautiful daughter of the "Man from Singapore," and soon to be wife of "crawling Jim" Kopensky—Mara.

Mara was the antithesis of the novel's heroine, Avanel, though allied with the likes of Velaska, an immoral woman to be found in close association with the yellow dance halls. The yellow dance halls permitted alcohol, and hence immoral and lascivious activities, remembering alcohol, hashish, and cocaine as markers for and inciters of cross cultural sexual activity (*Golden Book* 254-57). Mara was very feminine, not prone to unnecessary physical exertion, and apt to go out in public without chaperone.

Avanel, the heroine of the text, led her own regiment of sabers, reminiscent of Sophie in *The Golden Bottle*, and Roosevelt's Rough Riders. In Avanel, Lindsay offered

a potential model for gender relations, a secondary, but not subservient, status for women, stressing the inherent strength of American, biblical, Christian womanhood. Avanel represented militant morality, remembering women as the guardians of that morality at the turn of the century. Mara represented wealth, privilege, sensuality, and dissipation.

The "Man from Singapore," and by extension his family, were held up as models of inappropriate miscegenation. There was appropriate miscegenation and inappropriate miscegenation, and the distinction between the two represents a major part of the discussion. Avanel initially resisted highlighting her American Indian, Irish, Lithuanian, and Anglo-Saxon heritage. In contrast to Avanel, the Singaporian was also part English, but the favorable English genes were smothered by those of the "remittance man." On the one hand,

> The English strain has also given the Singaporian a facility in taking on the most modern scientific devices, and has endowed the proud island with political common sense for routine political tasks. The Chinese blood has given them patience and iron, to work on a hundred-year plan, first in their trade relations and banking arrangements, and then in all policies linked up with these. But now it is the sword of the far off ancient Arab disposition that is beginning to flash (*Golden Book* 233).[253]

[253] Earlier in the text the Singaporian noted that "His new caste found themselves resolving to make Singapore a city worshipped like Mecca, if they had to cut the throats of two thirds of the human race to bring it about" (*Golden* 232-33).

Lindsay expected his audience to understand his intent; but there was almost no explanation or discussion that would clarify the portrayal of the peaceful sword of Avanel versus the aggressive sword of the Arab to an outside audience.[254] There were good English genes and bad English genes. The good genes intermarried within the race, strengthening the race. Good genes cross bred with bad genes, across racial lines, led to dissipation. There was good violence and bad violence. Good violence, represented by Avanel, meant women activists taking a sword to the house of the "Cocaine Buddha." Bad violence was proffered by those who resisted good violence. Though not necessarily logical, the symbolism would seldom have been questioned then or today.

We have discussed Lindsay's oft repeated phrase, the phrase used to explain this good/bad distinction: "Bad public taste is mob law. Good public taste is democracy" (Sayre 229).[255] This could be read as a gloss on the literary critic Matthew Arnold's "the best that is known and thought in the world." In other words, good and bad can be seen as a matter of us and them. Both "mob law" and "democracy" are codes for race and morality. Democracy is seldom meant literally. Voting separate but equal, with a respect for middle-class values, and the realization that certain ethnicities are unready to stand independently alongside the more developed Anglo-Saxon, would be Lindsay's perspective on democracy in action. In the novel, democracy stood in opposition to an

[254] This recalls the Symbolic Interactionist injunction: There are rules; everyone knows what they are, but nobody can explain them to you.

[255] Given Lindsay's penchant for textual borrowing, much the same idea can be found in Robert Henri's *The Art Spirit* (1923). Henri's text was a compilation of his thoughts over a period of maybe three decades, and I tend to attribute the phrase to Henri and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's committee on the use of art and film rather than Lindsay. Henri wrote, "the presence of good art will unconsciously refine a community and . . . poor art will do it incalculable harm" (117). Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), 117.

aristocracy of wealth, the goal of the Singaporeans from the "Raffles Plain" (*Golden Book* 254).

Lindsay viewed democracy and aristocracy as competing forms of social control. Democracy was not democracy per se, for Lindsay was not much interested in the masses left to their own devices, which is what he would have defined as "mob law." Indeed, when Lindsay introduced the opening of his *Golden* war between East and West, he wrote, "The 'People' have escaped the leash" (145). Democracy was a marker identifying race, ethnicity, and culture. It was a marker for Western civilization; the historian Fritz Kern documented this heritage as derived of Germanic tribesmen, the prerogative of the yeoman Anglo-Saxon tradition, as evolved from the Magna Carta (1215), and ultimately from the Athenian Greek, also blond haired, blue-eyed Aryans.[256]

Lindsay's *Golden* war first broke out in a conflict over the right to fly airplanes. Lindsay's idealized society owned airplanes communally, but the wealthy were purchasing their own airplanes, which violated Constitutional law. The planes the wealthy flew were more sophisticated and elaborate than the ones allocated by the State. And this inequality created friction. Democratic society was supposed to afford equal opportunity, but the wealthy were obviously affording their children superior opportunity. Available piloting jobs went to the well-trained and experienced, which meant the wealthy. The common people rose up and torched the planes of the wealthy, in defense

[256] Fritz Kern, *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages*. S. B. Chrimes, Trans. (Oxford, England: B. Blackwell, 1939), xviii-xxi.

of law (140).[257] And there was no doubt that the wealthy were allied with "the Cocaine Buddha of Singapore," the aristocracy (150).

On the one hand the airplanes represent an expressed metaphor for the rise of technology and materialism in America. On the other hand, enemy aliens were specifically prohibited from using airplanes were one of the prohibited possessions of enemy aliens during WWI; in that sense Lindsay followed the historical record.[258] It was no accident that the refusal to abide by the communal ownership of airplanes was represented in Lindsay's text by potential enemy aliens, cocaine, and Singapore. Lindsay was creating a dichotomy. And part of this dichotomy represented an anti-materialist bent.[259] St. Friend, the theological hero of the text, preaches a sermon including the statement:

> I am probably against all mechanical advancement. . . . The father of the souls of many of our young people seems the telegraph, the mother, the railroad. There does not appear to be a filament of their minds made of anything more human than the uncanny filament of the incandescent light (154-55).

The sermon went on to lament the proliferation of industrial pollution in pursuit of new weapons of war as opposed to more human and humane pursuits. The products of the

---

[257] Here, mob or vigilante action in support of law, in support of middle-class values, is acceptable.
[258] J. N. Larned. *The New Larned History for Ready Reference, Reading and Research*. Volume 1. (Springfield, Massachusetts: C. A. Nichols Publishing Company, 1922), 217.

[259] Lindsay's swimming against the tide, embracing cooperative ownership and rejecting capitalist intent. The Palmer raids, which didn't occur until Lindsay had all but finished his text, hammered an anti-socialist theme. But in supporting cooperative ownership, if not outright socialism, Lindsay was demonstrating a sensitivity to race, socialism and socialists.

new industrialization were called "toys," meaning they had little or nothing to do with day to day survival, and absolutely nothing to do with "wisdom." St. Friend lamented the effect mechanization was having upon mankind, with automobiles creating "overfed automobile driver[s]," and concluded "life is a glorious adventure and was never meant to be a matter of merely mechanical achievement or cold calculation for physical power" (155-56). The implication of the text was that mechanization was feeding the impulse to wealth and hedonism versus understanding, and the dichotomy underlying the coming war was wealth versus an ethical middle class led community. Within this same frame, Lindsay condemned the hypocrisy of labor organizers who used union offices as a path to socio-economic advancement (*Golden Book* 159).

The historian John Dower, in *War Without Mercy* (1986), argued that the Japanese did nothing in World War II that the allies did not also do. Dower argued World War II was a race war and that the commission of atrocities was routine precisely because it *was* a race war. Dower cited Charles Lindbergh's diary of the war in the Pacific as being replete with Lucky Lindy's observations of casual atrocities committed against the Japanese.[260] But Dower makes a nice distinction that parallels the arguments Lindsay makes in *The Golden Book of Springfield*. The Americans both Dower and Lindsay described did not see *themselves* as committing atrocities; they saw "atrocities" as defining the activities of their enemies.[261] The war Lindsay projected was not only between white and Asian; moral and immoral; it was also between aristocracy and

[260] John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific* War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 69.
[261] Dower argued race war as an ongoing tradition in America (10).

democracy, the haves and the have-nots. And within this frame, Lindsay obviously cast Singapore as the South of the American Civil War, hypocritically demanding "States Rights" (*Golden Book* 162). In Lindsay's text the American forces struggling against the propaganda of Singapore and wealth, here the Boone faction, lie. They use gossip and newspaper smear campaigns, with no proof and only supposition, to undermine the reputations of their enemies.

> [Boone] boldly prints the list of those morally certain to have much buried alcohol and gold but puts it so deftly there is no risk of suit. . . . And true or false, the stories are whispered around the town about Jim [Kopinsky] that will spoil him as a political asset. . . . It is whispered that the police have clearly established [He has been guilty of certain cruelties to animals and children.]. . . . And so Boone gets Jim 'where he lives,' for rumor hurts Jim to the soul (*Golden Book* 164-65).

Lindsay's narrator routinely condemned rumors and falsehoods aimed at his heroes, but propaganda in pursuit of the right cause made all the difference. One's enemies were immoral by definition.[262]

Eventually Boone rose before the assembled representatives of Springfield and denounced the nation of Singapore and its minions who had infiltrated the city. Disguised as immigrant laborers from the Far East, Singaporian soldiers were said to have purposively secreted themselves among the populace in order to overthrow the rightful government of Springfield at the behest of the priests of the "Cocaine Buddha."

[262] There was also an allusion to the international arms trade that recalled the profits Vickers made selling arms to both the British and the Germans (*The Golden Book* 166).

And “Race hate sweeps the hall like a blasting wind [sic]” (238). Where once the young Lindsay had supported Governor Altgeld in his amnesty for the surviving Haymarket rioters, now, in the world of *The Golden Book*, alien underground sedition runs rampant, demanding government redress, no doubt a reference to the Palmer raids.

Lindsay’s story line runs parallel to *Birth of a Nation*, and his ultimate solution to the war with Singapore was to unleash a thinly disguised Ku Klux Klan. Lindsay mentions the Klan several times in the text by name, but just as *Birth of a Nation* was the story of how a well-meaning wrong was righted, the story of *The Golden Book* was about how this same righting of wrongs revolution will be brought to the world stage, how the insolence of race will once more be put in its place, albeit in as kind and gentle a way as can be managed. This was the novel’s program of action.

The error most make in interpreting Lindsay and his works is in seeing him as a unique and arcane figure in American literature, seeing his religious and social focus as either somehow aberrant or irrelevant. Few intellectuals today give credence to the strength of belief and faith, the sense of mysticism and magic, that permeated America and the West before and during the war. Edgar Cayce, America’s Nostradamus, was a contemporary of Lindsay’s, two years his elder. Kahil Gibran, of *The Prophet* (1924) fame, was four years younger than Lindsay, a young Lebanese immigrant to America. Gibran’s career followed much the same course as Lindsay’s, art and then literature; albeit, Gibran was more gifted, religiously talented, and successful as a writer. Hermann Hesse, author of *Demian* (1919), was born in 1877, the same year as Edgar Cayce, of Protestant missionaries, receiving much more formal theological training than Lindsay.

Lindsay was four years younger than Albert Schweitzer, a missionary and theologian who wrote his medical dissertation on the sanity of Christ, *The Psychiatric Study of Jesus* (1913). George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House* (1917) parallels the main themes in Lindsay's *Golden Book of Springfield*, if without the same degree of optimism for the future. And Sinclair Lewis, six years Lindsay's junior, in both *Babbitt* (1922) and *It Can't Happen Here* (1935), reflected much the same social fear and chagrin that Lindsay addressed in *his* novel.

It Can't Happen Here is essentially the same story as *The Golden Book of Springfield*: wealthy, religious hypocrisy overcoming traditional American middle class virtue. Lindsay extolled pedestrian middle class values, while others saw these values as, well, pedestrian. Both Lindsay and Lewis lamented America's moral and spiritual dissolution. The difference between Lindsay and Lewis was that Lindsay would have *approved* of Lewis's tyrannical President Buzz Windrip, so long as Buzz eschewed the popular "hypocrisy" of wealth.

Lindsay's heroes have all the charm of Klansmen, principled in their own way, but almost totally ruthless, and completely disinterested in compromise. This quality of ethnocentricity is what makes Lindsay's text so difficult to read and understand. He insists on religious toleration, building example after example of a Vatican II tolerance of religious diversity, only to shun anything that doesn't embrace traditional Protestant American middle class values. "Blue-faced" Surto Hurdenburg is an excellent example of this. In taking his oath to the World Government, he is constrained to "specifically promise" to avoid "alcoholic liquors," the "yellow dance halls," to obey the dictates of

his conscience, and accept the "lordship of Christ" (178-79). Liquor and the dance halls were seen as the preserve of Catholic immigrants in America. Obeying one's conscience to the exclusion of the Church could leave one standing outside on the steps. Lindsay promoted a sense of Christianity with a very personal and Swedenborgian lilt to it (186). His sense of Catholicism focused on nationalism, secularism, and region, to the extent of ignoring the Pope or the international structure of Catholicism.

Lindsay argued religious and racial toleration in a way that makes it difficult to understand what "toleration" meant. Toleration in the text seems to mean "whatever I say it means." Toleration seems to mean: "I will tolerate your perspectives so long as you agree that my perspectives are what matter." And, "You must agree with me, completely." Well, fair enough for a novel, but not if you intend to implement that novel as a template for social change. At that point the argument for toleration becomes a demand for compliance, and "toleration" becomes propaganda. Recalling that, "The function of propaganda is. . . , not to weigh and ponder the rights of different people, but exclusively to emphasize the one right which it has set out to argue. . . .
Its . . . task is to serve our own right, always and unflinchingly."[263] Lindsay would probably not have been so blatant, but this would be in keeping with our prior discussion of Carlylian philosophy as a proto fascist creed.

And *that* leads us to a discussion of the Ku Klux Klan. Lindsay's parading, marching, orders remind one of nothing so much as the Klan, an organization mentioned often in the text (*Golden Book* 169). In a somewhat tedious fashion, the book is a

[263] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf.* Ralph Manheim, Trans. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 182.

narrative of parades, one after another, often on horseback, white horses. In *Birth of a Nation*, the Klan's horses were dressed, or disguised, in white cloth. At a time when people paid close attention to horses, just as the automobile was gaining popularity, disguising a horse might well have held some utility for masked riders. People might well have been able to identify the rider by the horse. In Lindsay's text, however, there were no masks, though corporal punishment, threats, and verbal abuse, perpetuated on miscreants, was very common.

Lindsay called on the "clansmen to turn out at the polls" to vote against dance halls and hence for temperance, which would have been a Klan perspective (200-01). In terms of physical violence, and only generally speaking, the distinctions Lindsay makes were between corporal and capital (extralegal) punishment. Outright murder and violence in the text were the work of alien mobs, organized with a top down hierarchical model, or the individuals that led or directed those mobs. Assaults, threats of lynching, or forms of non terminal violence, on the other hand, were portrayed as very American. *Limited* violence was American. War, of course, was another matter. In the novel, Lindsay's America crossed the Pacific Ocean to go to war against the forces of the "Cocaine Buddha." So, organized violence, as a form of capital punishment, on a mass scale, was acceptable, when faced with miscreants who would not mend their ways. Localized and bare-fisted violence was considered acceptable and fairly mundane.

The riders of the war horses on parade were dressed in white. Avanel's war horse was white (191). And we are told:

> But he [Boone] says that these Singaporeans are as afraid of white as. . . the negroes of the South were afraid of it, which enabled the Klu Klux to send them scattering. It is no idle fancy of his that these people are as superstitious as the blacks of the old days (*Golden* 239).

The reference to "the negroes of the South" is a reference to a scene in *Birth of a Nation*, where the founder of the Klan observes black people running from white children hiding (playfully) beneath a sheet. The image was that of a ghost rising from the dead. And the meaning was that black minorities were superstitious, living without an understanding of true religion. To be white was to be recognized by all as a superior being. Even the enemy, the Singaporeans, recognized its efficacy. White stood for virginal, race, honor, fidelity, religion (Christianity), heredity, "truth," "decency," and fear, if seen from beyond the pale. That Lindsay would tie "white" so tightly to the Klan, and his heroine, Avanel, demonstrates his orientation, perspective, and intended audience.

These riders are Lindsay's amazons, the female cavalry that will be sent to joust with the forces of the "Cocaine Buddha." And their white raiment could be translated as virginal, which was no doubt part of Lindsay's intent. Lindsay was riding a metaphor, and need not be taken too literally. The moral, ethical, and racial awareness of true womanhood will lead America in opposition to the perversions of Asia. Armed white womanhood, indignant womanhood, Judith of Bethula, and not the Sabine women, not Samson's Delilah, nor John the Baptist's Salome, will lead a moral revival that will encompass the world. In an act that anticipates and reflects Michael Omi and Howard Winant's observation that "Racial intermixture was seen as a sin against nature which

would lead to the creation of 'biological throwbacks,'" our anti-heroine, Mara, will kill slinking Jim Kopensky in a consummating fit of passion.[264] Mara was not white, or pure white. She was an admixture of various races, including Malay, and an adherent of the cocaine Buddha. The racial fear inherent in the use of cocaine was passionate violence. So, much as in *Birth of a Nation*, we have a contrast between virtuous womanhood and women without virtue, as defined by race. And in *Birth of a Nation*, virtuous womanhood was tied to the Klan. The Klan worked to preserve virtuous womanhood.

The text itself could be seen as an extended depiction of Mara's seduction of Slinking Jim versus the virtuous and prolonged courtship of Avanel by the unnamed narrator (presumably Lindsay). Lindsay depicted American women as free, but willingly uninterested in leaving the home, which is the way the historian Nancy MacLean has depicted the Klan's perspective on women.[265] How to court a woman, the value of a woman, and the nature of true womanhood, could all be presented as major themes in the text. So, chivalry was demonstrated and implied, which not surprisingly, was also a theme of the Klan, the proper name for the Klan being the *Knights* of the Ku Klux Klan.[266]

The Klan's self-appointed role in America was to limit unwanted ethnic incursions, limit incursions of unwanted religions, protect true womanhood, promote

---

[264] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 1994), 15.
[265] Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 181.
[266] Regarding piety, Lindsay has St. Friend remark, "Pray consider that, in your freedom from vows this splendid June day, you are nevertheless dubbed knights, my fellow citizens. In medieval times monks and knights served the Church with the same divine vocation and devotion" (185). The knights of the Ku Klux Klan were on a mission from God.

community, and oppose the accumulation of unjustified, or unearned, wealth.[267] Black Hawk Boone, "University Professor" and editor of the newspaper, *The Boone Ax*, argued for the abolishment of metal currency as a way to enforce the constitutional prohibition on millionaires (*Golden Book* 115). Lindsay's various "clans" (probably an intentional reference and double entendre) were all representative exemplars of middle class, hard working, two-fisted communities, democratic in spirit, if not in fact. The opponents of the clans were the scions of inherited wealth, saloon owners, drug addicts, the lascivious, foreign-born or foreign-allied scofflaws of privilege. Lindsay's clans bear a resemblance to the Ku Kluxers. Not everyone in America referred to the Ku Kluxers as the Klan, spelled with a "K"[268] Thomas Dixon, for example, preferred the more conventional spelling, "*Clansman*." To find Lindsay referring to the clan, with a "C," would not have been uncommon for the day.[269]

When looking at comparisons between Lindsay's text and the Klan, it is important to understand that the reemergence of the Ku Kluxers occurred simultaneously, almost to the day, with the release of Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (Wade 143). It would have been very easy for Lindsay to see the reemergence of the KKK as a demonstration of his *Art of the Moving Picture* philosophy, the power of film to promote moral acts.

Lindsay's *Golden Book* was supposed to have been published in 1918. It wasn't in fact published until 1920, and the Klan was a growing financial success by 1920,

---

[267] Large chain stores that drove family businesses to bankruptcy in the name of market capitalism were considered an unjustified form of capital accumulation (MacLean 77, 91).
[268] Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 177.
[269] An extensive discussion of Lindsay's clans can be found in Chapter 4 of *The Golden Book of Springfield*.

though still a work in progress. It would be easy to read Lindsay's *Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only* promotional copy as an attempt to get out in front of a political issue, to shape, redirect, and lead it. Lindsay's text could be read as an attempt to create a more racially muted philosophical basis for the emerging Klan, and projecting that philosophy onto the international stage. Lindsay offered tolerance for Catholics, Jews, and allied white races, which the Klan condemned, though, as we've seen, Lindsay's tolerance was conditional.

A case in point would be his heroine, Avanel. Though being American born, she was portrayed as having come from a long line of Catholics, on her mother's side, Lithuanian and Irish Catholics (*Golden Book* 72). Catholics and Jews were the anointed enemies of the Klan, the Klan feeding on the support of fundamentalist evangelical Protestantism (MacLean 91). By making the heroine of the text an idealized daughter of a long line of Catholics, *and* Irish/Lithuanian to boot, Lindsay made an argument for religious toleration *and* racial toleration, simultaneously. Lindsay made an argument for expanding the boundaries of acceptable religion and ethnicity, and this theme ran throughout his texts. He took the Klan's known political position, supported it while turning it at the same time, softening it. This was his technique.

He argued anti-intellectualism, his reference to "hair-brained sociologists," but he would also argue a respect for university education (*Golden Book* 47, 115). He argued for a separate but equal toleration of blacks, while having Avanel comment on their lack of industriousness: "most of them [the new public housing buildings] still hold slack colored people" (*Golden Book* 85). The reference is ambiguous in that the word "slack"

was most often used as a way to define slick "slack" Kopensky. But the reference to public housing came within an acknowledgment that these new housing complexes had been designed by the black architect John Emis: "beautiful, flamboyant jungle houses constructed for his people by John Emis" (*Golden Book* 88). John Emis recreated a vision of his homeland while demonstrating his intellectual artistry and finesse. Lindsay presented us with a conversation reminiscent of "The Congo," demonstrating the jungle as the natural residence of black folk, but also demonstrating their artistry, potential, and intellect.

In the person of Avanel we have a demonstration of how the Irish became white, by standing in opposition to black (Ignatiev 102). Through Avanel, Lindsay projected an affirmation of racial segregation, the separate but unequal; through John Emis, Lindsay projected the existence of the talented tenth and their pride in accomplishment. John Emis subtly marked each building he designed, so there would be no doubt as to the architect, or his race (*Golden Book* 80). Not all races were to be casually separated. Lindsay's was a muted racism, more tolerant and gentle than that advocated by the Klan.

When looking at the similarities between Lindsay's perspectives and those of the Klan, one finds an acceptance of the brawling use of force (but not necessarily vigilantism), an acceptance of racial categories, Anti-saloon League temperance, Protestantism, a middle-class bias for an anti-wealth, anti-foreign, anti-immigrant world view, and an America first, paternal, pro cult-of-true-womanhood, small town community

perspective.[270] The historian Frank Freidel noted that "[m]any a man who had voted for Bryan or Roosevelt was now determined to fight for his cherished smalltown way of life, and if the ballot failed he would resort to the bedsheet of the Klu Klux Klan."[271]

Lindsay and the Klan would disagree on socialism, civic religion, lynching, ethnicity and race. Lindsay (equivocally) embraced socialism in *The Golden Book*, a natural extension of his social gospel leanings (*Golden Book* 6, 96). He saw religion in the Judeo-Christian tradition, almost across the board, as a litmus test for civilized behavior, though he privileged Protestantism, and often professed support for both Buddhists and secular religion; he sometimes stood opposed to the mob behavior characterized by the Klan, even when the Klan stood in opposition to the forces of Mammon, and he saw nothing intrinsically evil in racial definitions, standing against some forms of miscegenation. Of course, Lindsay redefined miscegenation, allowing more racial latitude in marriage. Lindsay was willing to include more range in the definition of "white" than would have been socially acceptable at the time. In *The Golden Book*, Lindsay offered a more moderate perspective on race, religion, and socialism than would have been prevalent in the Klan.

[270] Lindsay makes a distinction between bare knuckle justice and vigilantism that is difficult to follow at times. Vigilantism ends up being the work of outside agitators, who promoted lynching. Bare knuckle justice was the manly, undaunted, work of upstanding citizens who did "not follow the well established American lynching custom of burning alive" (*Golden Book* 211).
[271] Frank Freidel, *America in the Twentieth Century*. Third Edition. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 217-18.

Lindsay's life long mission was to integrate the off-white with the white. His mission was to show the right of some ethnicities to the status of white, and he did this over and over in his texts, drawing the line a little left of center. He was a man of two worlds and two minds, torn and unbalanced. And, he had epilepsy.

So, he wrote a book to change the world, promoting a much milder more accepting brand of the Ku Klux Klan. White women were still seen as virginal, but the definition of white itself had changed. Catholics, Jews and Mormons were acceptable; heathen hedonists were not. And there was a separate but equal tolerance of race, but not miscegenation. In many ways, Lindsay could be seen as promoting the rhetorical fallacy of special pleading, Lindsay's American Indian heritage as a part of the definition of white.[272] The clans of Lindsay's text seem drawn from the Klan, but are much more verbal, and more ornery, than violent. Black Hawk Boone was as curmudgeonish as Lindsay, a shaper of weapons, but one who never killed. Lindsay's clan marched, without lynching. It pressed home the point of the sword, but only against foreign race enemies, overseas. At home, the clan was about moral suasion, majority rule, peer pressure, and Judeo-Christian religious virtue. Lindsay never resolved the problem of dissent at home. The armies cross the Pacific to defeat the religion of the "Cocaine Buddha." But it was unclear how this resolved the problem of abusive wealth, power,

[272] Gandhi employed a similar strategy in South Africa, arguing Indian immigrants more deserving of equality than black natives. It is very difficult to escape the social paradigm. Reality is perceived only as it is defined. Or, to put it within a Sapir/Whorf perspective, some things cannot be said (and understood, or perhaps easily understood) within a language, because of the assumptions and built in definitions. If the reality is defined as "race," then discussions tend to revolve around that standard.

and morality at home. Seemingly the problem was the foreign, and if rooted out overseas it would die barren on the branch, in Springfield.

There were contemporaries of Lindsay who saw and experienced American racism first hand, and their perspectives would come to haunt Americans in the coming decades. Between 1911 and 1916 Ho Chi Minh visited the United States several times.[273] In 1924, writing of his American experiences, Ho Chi Minh noted:

> It is well known that the black race is the most oppressed and most exploited of the human family. . . that the spread of capitalism and the discovery of the New World had as an immediate result the rebirth of slavery which was, for centuries, a scourge for the Negroes and a bitter disgrace for mankind. What everyone does not perhaps know is that after 65 years of so-called emancipation, American Negroes still endure atrocious moral and material sufferings, of which the most cruel and horrible is the custom of lynching.[274]

Ho Chi Minh's Indochinese revolution was about race and equality. And he wrote extensively under the general rubric of "Racial Hatred" (DeCaro *Rhetoric of Revolt* 104-110). Emma Goldman's work more generally referred to race as a part of her belief system, her anarchism. In her articles "Preparedness, the Road to Universal Slaughter" (1915) and "A New Declaration of Independence" (1909) she presented race as an invalid

---

[273] Peter A. DeCaro, *Rhetoric of Revolt: Ho Chi Minh's Discourses for Revolution* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 10.

[274] Peter A. DeCaro, "Ho Chi Minh's Rhetoric for Revolution." *American Communications Journal*; Wednesday, September 27, 2000, 14:18:38 GMT. Hosted by North Carolina State University. November 13, 2006 http://acjournal.org/holdings/vol113Iss3/spec1/decaro.html.

category: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all human beings, irrespective of race, color, or sex, are born with the equal right to share at the table of life."[275] Emma Goldman was deported as an undesirable alien, as a result of the Palmer Raids. And Sayyid Qutb of the next generation used his first hand experience of American racism as part of his rationale for radical Islamic revolution.[276] Lindsay's clan was about exporting American virtue to the world, and limiting the import of the foreign to America, America maintaining its status as an untainted beacon to the world. But the virtue of a separate but equal world order, however benign, was not universally self-evident.

One can look at Lindsay's work as a restatement of James Weldon Johnson's *Biography of an Ex-Colored Man* from a closer approximation to white. Lindsay implicitly argued that one becomes white in changing the definition of black. And he tells us explicitly that simply because one is blonde does not mean one is necessarily white.

The implication of Lindsay's promotional efforts in *A Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only* would seem to be an attempt to raise a ground swell of support for a left of center perspective on race, gender, and ethnicity, not that all Americans supported the Klan. The Lynds' *Middletown* (1929) suggested there was contemporary resistance to

[275] Joy James, "A New Declaration of Independence." *Imprisoned Intellectuals: America's Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation and Rebellion* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 1.
[276] Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2005), 86.

the Klan.[277] Lindsay wanted a kinder, gentler, way. He wanted middle-class moral leadership. He wanted it *his* way. The Klan did emphasize the leadership of Protestant preachers, but was probably more working class, less intellectual, than Lindsay would have liked (MacLean 94). Lindsay not only wanted to make a pedagogical point, he wanted to lead, but he was just not the kind of fellow others would willingly follow.

The difference between Avanel and Mara is that one is white and one is not, and the crime of slinking Jim Kopensky is in choosing "not." Jim died for this choice, at the hand of his fiancé Mara, who was in the throes of a cocaine induced passion, but Jim's fate was already preordained. He was wealthy and aristocratic. He was already defined outside the pale. The real significance of his death lies in the turnabout of the image. Black *men* were supposed to rape and kill in the throes of cocaine. Here there is a reversal of gender, and that brings into question the masculinity, the patriarchal orientation, of Jim *and* Mara. Who is a real man, and who is a real woman, outside the boundaries of the white race? Miscegenation meant one stepped beyond the race, and traitors died. Jim died for his transgression. And that was the message.

Despite her status as a regimental commander, Avanel was portrayed as nothing so much as a headstrong child. A woman in need of constant guidance would be a very Puritan perspective, but it also reminds one of the way women were portrayed by the Klan. Nancy MacLean pointed out that "the Klan championed suffrage for Protestant white women. As did many others, Klansmen viewed female suffrage as their best

[277] Robert Lynd & Helen Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1957), 122, 366.

defense for Prohibition." However, she went on to discuss the Klan's "ambivalence" over the issue of female independence (116-19).

Lindsay argued limited change, limited equality. He argued *more* racial acceptance—keeping in mind that Lindsay has told us race and religion are tied—more equality. But even the limited change Lindsay promoted was more than society would grant, and Lindsay had no intention of promoting universal equality. He was unable to conceive of a world that was not based on race and the middle class. Probably because, from the perspective of race and class, freedom is a zero sum game. If some people have more then others must have less, and Lindsay had fought his whole life to escape the status of those who had less.

Believe me, do not fear either the rogues or the wicked. Fear the honest man who deceives himself; he is honest with himself, he believes in the good, and everyone trusts him; but, unfortunately, he deceives himself about the means with which to procure the good for mankind. Antonio Gramsci.[278]

It is not possible for any thinking person to live in such a society as our own without wanting to change it. George Orwell.[279]

Chapter V: Conclusion

The Language Speaks the Man

In *The Art of the Moving Picture* Lindsay addressed the difficulty in speaking across culture, the need to acculturate and teach new immigrants the language and mannerisms of Americans, and Lindsay's solution was film, where the action could be translated in subtitles. But in a larger sense there *are* some things that cannot be translated. There are some things that are not even allowed to be articulated, so the very attempt at translation meets resistance even before the words are voiced. Benjamin Whorf argued much the same:

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the

[278] Joseph A. Buttigieg, Editor, *Antonio Gramsci: Prison Notebooks.* Volume I. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 209.
[279] George Orwell, Sonia Orwell, and Ian Angus, "Why I Joined the Independent Labour Party." *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: The Collected Essays, Journalism & Letters* (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher, 2000), 337.

> contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscope flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems of our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way—an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. . . all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated.[280]

That was the problem with the issue of race. "Race" was a topic that could only be addressed comparatively. Races were compared within a variable hierarchy. And "race" meant different things to different people. There was virtually no way to define it empirically. And lacking an empirical base, even those remembered as the stalwarts of racial equality often found themselves forced to the use of comparison in addressing the topic. And the very act of comparison undermined any sense of an equality between races. The language of the day promoted a comparative pejorative approach. For a man such as Lindsay, who drew so heavily on popular culture, the known definitions of race would have offered virtually no recourse to a comparative approach to "race," if one valued one's credibility. Equality is an assertion of human value. It did not represent an empirical analysis in Lindsay's day.

---

[280] Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Language, Thought, and Reality." *Language, Thought, and Reality*. John B. Carroll, Ed. (New York: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1956), 212-14.

Hair texture, skin color, noses, lips, perceived intelligence, religion, propensity to democracy, disease, violence, and temperance were all reasons to classify and measures of race, but ultimately these were only words, a shorthand communicating the "known" to native speakers. People "knew" what constituted race, and words were just the means by which they affirmed that "known." And the ability to grasp the cultural "known" was a way to identify oneself as American. Americans and potential Americans demonstrated an understanding of the racial hierarchy implied in the language. Americans and potential Americans could not afford to remain deaf to the subtleties of power.

The anthropologist Franz Boaz, an early stalwart and articulate opponent of racism, provides a good case in point here. In George Ferguson's *Psychology of the Negro* (1916), Boaz was quoted as writing:

> A number of anatomical facts point to the conclusion that the races of Africa, Australia and Melanasia are to a certain extent inferior to the races of Asia, America and Europe. We find that on the average the size of the brain of the negroid races is less than the size of the brain of other races; and the difference in favor of the mongaloid and white races is so great that we are justified in assuming a certain correlation between their mental ability and the increased size of their brain [sic].[281]

Boaz was reporting on the racial aspects of intelligence. Opposed to a racist agenda, even Boaz found himself resorting to a false empirical perspective race. This was the

[281] George Oscar Ferguson, *The Psychology of the Negro: An Experimental Study* (New York: Science Press, 1916), 3. See also, Franz Boaz, "The Mind of Primitive Man." *Science: A Weekly Journal Devoted to the Advancement of Science, Publishing the Official Notices and Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* (February 22, 1901): 283.

same dilemma Lindsay faced, Lindsay a man with far fewer academic and intellectual resources to work with. Boaz went on to discover facts and arguments refuting the logic of racial superiority; but Lindsay was much more a product of his day and culture. Lindsay believed in and argued American exceptionalism. And as we have seen, Americans who believed in an equality of races were few and far between in Lindsay's day. We have seen how the religious figures of the day found it expedient to work within the concept of race because denying racial hierarchy entirely undermined their credibility. The same would be true with Boaz. Essentially the paradigm seized the data and turned it to its own end. Had Boaz not made the pejorative comparison himself others would have, and they would have cited Boaz for his "irrational" and "unprofessional" refusal to address the "facts."

In 1933 W. E. B. Du Bois observed:

> Thus in America we have seen a wild and ruthless scramble of labor groups over each other in order to climb to wealth on the backs of black labor and foreign immigrants. The Irish climbed on the Negroes. The Germans scrambled over the Negroes and emulated the Irish. The Scandinavians fought forward next to the Germans and the Italians and "Bohunks" [natives of eastern central Europe] are crowding up, leaving Negroes still at the bottom chained to helplessness, first by slavery, then by disfranchisement and always by the color bar.[282]

[282] W. E. B. Du Bois and Herbert Aptheker, Eds. *Selections from the Crisis* (Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thompson Organization, 1983), 84.

Mahatma Gandhi linked the black people of Africa to savages, and portrayed them as little better than animals. Gandhi wrote:

> A general belief seems to prevail in the colony [South Africa] that the Indians are little better, if at all, than the savages or natives of Africa. Even the children are taught to believe in that manner, with the result that the Indian is being dragged down to the position of a raw Kaffir.[283]

Susan Friedman, in *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (1998), writes that "Feminism is a white middle class movement."[284] That is much the same perspective one would come to from our discussion of Francis Willard and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. We've seen that Paul Dunbar, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mark Twain addressed race in a hierarchically comparative fashion. These were all people who worked towards community and equality, but they found themselves confined by a paradigm promoting racial comparisons. Statements on the equality of all human beings were less well received than the comparative hierarchy. Lindsay was a part of this same culture. He faced the same rewards and censure. And though he was no Franz Boaz, he was far from embracing the racial perspectives of Thomas Dixon, author of *The Clansman* (1905). By default, Lindsay's technique of "borrowing" from popular texts and themes predicted he would mirror the sentiments of the day. Even the great authors and intellectuals of that day had difficulty escaping the paradigm.

---

[283] G. B. Singh, *Gandhi: Behind the Mask of Divinity* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2004), 183.
[284] Susan S. Friedman, *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43.

Lindsay undermined the potential for critical and independent thought in other ways. We saw him introduce his idea of secular religion in *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915) and develop it in more depth in *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920). Though ill-defined, the secularization of religion seemed to mean the adoption of an uncritical ethnocentric America first philosophy elevated to the status of religion, the dynamics of a small town congregation projected onto the world. Religious belief seems to have come to mean community consensus for Lindsay, albeit a ferocious and democratically arrived at consensus. This is popular culture elevated to the status of a theocracy, and the guardians of that culture were to be the icons of the middle class, the Michaels and the Boones. In Lindsay's democracy, everyone had the right to vote, so long as they voted "correctly." The middle class was to run, order, and promote that democracy. Lindsay privileged the middle class with the ability to discern ethics and morality, but in his major texts the meaning of ethics and morality seems nothing more than the right of the middle class community to decide, regardless. And that would have been the perspective of Thomas Carlyle, order and hierarchy at any cost. Lindsay's only consistent qualifications to the right to decide would have been the use of drugs, alcohol and the accumulation and demonstration of wealth. To be wealthy meant one stood outside of and violated the sense of community. The use of alcohol and drugs did the same.

Race was more equivocal. All races were included within Lindsay's idealized Springfield community. But the villains who sought to undermine that society were specifically tied to black—the Klings from the Indian subcontinent—and Slavic nationalities. The implication would be that some races carried unwanted tendencies,

though all races were potentially welcome within the community. It is also clear that hybridization was no barrier to social inclusion. Virtually all of the characters in Lindsay's *Golden Book* were biracial. The hierarchy among races was preserved, allowing for a broader definition of potential inclusion, though not necessarily the probable inclusion of all. In itself, this was an improvement on the politics of race in Lindsay's day. There was the possibility for the inclusion of all and hybridization became an absolute good. However, effectively, the logic of the racial categories was so convoluted and complex in Lindsay's novel that it leaves even an informed reader puzzled as to the meaning of it all. I suspect Lindsay's intent was to argue the possibility of inclusion while maintaining intact the contemporary structure of racial definitions: an inherent conflict in the text.

Lindsay's philosophy of education and his concept of the secularization of religion were based on thought control, the "propaganda" to be administered by film in his *Art of the Moving Picture*. Lindsay depicted all true Americans as thinking the same, believing the same, acting the same. There was a frighteningly Orwellian conformity to the brave new world we were to inherit at Lindsay's hands. True Americans might disagree on minor questions of art and aesthetics, issues of no particular relevance to the community. But true Americans *agreed* on the middle class values of community, energetically enforcing those values. Deviance was not allowed. So, there was to be an acceptance of different races and cultures, so long as there ceased to be any real difference between races and cultures, so long as all races and cultures adopted middle

class values and accepted the leadership of the middle class: not exactly a blueprint for tolerance. It is not surprising Lindsay would posit a clan based society in his novel.

Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) represents more than a simple parody of Vachel Lindsay's "Congo." It is very clear in Reed's novel that he had studied the bulk of Lindsay's work and not just the poem. The real value to be found in *Mumbo Jumbo* is that Reed moves beyond a simple parody. If it were just an inversion of black and white within a hierarchy then it would still be an argument for the comparative categorization of race and the promotion of conformity within any given culture. But Reed goes beyond this. In the person of his hero, Papa La Bas, we see a man who works to transcend culture and race. Papa La Bas works to become a human being, beyond the categories of culture and race; he works to create himself as a man, unique and beyond the cultural pattern. In this sense, Reed transcended Lindsay's work. Lindsay sought to promote the millennium by forcing all to embrace a middle class Anglo-Saxon sense of a hierarchical community. Reed essentially argues human beings have both the obligation and the ability to transcend the conforming influence of a culture or society. Reed transcends Lindsay's ideal of the Americanization of the world. Reed's ideal is not to be American, but to be human.

When Harold Bloom listed Lindsay as one of the most important American literary figures of the last century, he wasn't really addressing aesthetics. Lindsay wrote some very good poetry, but the overall quality of his work was inconsistent. Nobody would read *The Golden Book of Springfield* for the sake of aesthetics. However, as an explanation of how tainted and off-white peoples could become white, it stands as a

unique document, a demonstration of his *Art of the Moving Picture*. Lindsay presents a program for assimilation. And in that sense he goes a step beyond Mary Antin's *They Who Knock at Our Gates* (1914). Antin argues immigrants ought to be assimilated. Lindsay shows how it can be done.

In noting Lindsay's literary importance, Bloom is addressing the topicality of Lindsay's subject matter, and in that sense Bloom is entirely correct in noting Lindsay's literary importance. Lindsay's most important works addressed race, and specifically they addressed race as a mutable force. Lindsay argued that race should not define the man—usually. Though Lindsay did write of race comparatively, playing white off against black, his purpose was to show how the tainted and off-white peoples could become white Americans in good standing, and even the fate of black people was not portrayed as immutable. His comprehensive attempt to redefine white into a larger and more inclusive category makes Lindsay's work almost unique. Portraying Lindsay as the Du Bois of European immigration might be an exaggeration, but an exaggeration with a grain of truth to it. Another issue, more ephemeral but no less unique, was Lindsay's attempt to redefine the status of his epilepsy from that of a racial marker to an inconvenient disease. This change in definitional status would have paved the way for social acceptance. Lindsay was an interpreter of sorts, a translator. He attempted to translate the cultural vernacular of his day, not literally, but with a twist. Like any good poet, he attempted to turn the language against itself.

Towards the end of his life, Lindsay published a very revealing autobiographical poem, "Twenty Years Ago" (1928), that does not make the anthologies or his *Collected*

Poems. In the poem, Lindsay argued that freedom from social constraint was his life-long goal. If that *was* his goal, which is what I have argued in this text, then his method was "to liberate [him]self by transferring slavery to other beings."[285] He sought to compel the conformity of others through film. The immigrant "other" needed this subliminal compulsion in order to embrace the Americanization process. His target ideal seems to have been his own middle class American Indian hybrid heritage. And this ideal American was to become the model for the world. Freeing one's self at the expense of everyone else is a far different literary message than one finds in Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*, where Papa La Bas frees himself despite the obstacles and with no intention to enforce the conformity of others. Lindsay's literary life represents a journey and a statement. In order to escape constricting social definitions, Lindsay redefined himself as the definer and not the defined. In defining the "other" Lindsay simply learned to impose the restrictions he had escaped. He taught the objectification of others, human beings as artifacts to be numbered and ordered. In the poem, "Twenty Years Ago," we see the grudging realization that he had never escaped at all, that the terms of his confinement had simply evolved around him.

Because it is so difficult to find, I have included Lindsay's award winning autobiographical poem in its entirety:

Twenty Years Ago

To the Right Honorable The Earl of Chesterfield

[285] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 159.

(When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, etc. . . . . but)

I

You call me “a Troubadour,”
But I am an adventurer, in hieroglyphics, buildings, and designs.
When I was eight years old, I had two hundred building blocks,
Given to me by The Reverend Fred H. Wines,
And I gave them to his grandson half a lifetime afterward,
Not before I had made out of them
A Springfield built of silver blocks, and towers and vines and valentines,
And a paper doll with a paper diadem.
A Sangamon palace of the soul,
With the American flag upon a fishing pole.
And kite lines rose to dizzy heights, and underneath were caves and mines and coal,
And those who came to view the sights paid five cornelian marbles for the toll.

II

With insulting volubility, eyebrow-lift and leer,
You label me a “Sonneteer”, but still I claim my liberty,
Your advertisements weigh me not in chains.
I am going to be a printer like Old William Morris,

I am going to put a strain on all your brains.

I choose to be a Mayor, like Old Tom Johnson, if I have to run for Mayor of Loami,

I choose to be an etcher studying James M. Whistler.

You say I am a rhymer, but who am I?

Your silly big-timer, to do a turn for you?

Your Tom Thumb in the side-show of small-talk?

I tell you, Lord Chesterfield, I'm no man's baby wonder.

I will go and harvest wheat in Kansas thunder,

I will go and feed the red corn to the stock.

Perhaps, Lord Chesterfield, the next time you meet me

You will find me building watches on Mount Blanc?

I claim the right to make the worst watches you can shake;

It is better than to die drowned in a tank

Of advertising ink, so thick no fish could think,

A grave that is no grave it is so rank.

III

I have loved, for instance, Whistler, and Jimmy's gentle book,

As an art student. It seemed good to me,

There are days when Whistler's dog-whip is the one lash in the world

There are days when his long cane is all I see.

Then all men are my enemies except my oldest enemies,

Who knew me in Springfield when a child.

They do not read my books, but O they have read me,

An egotist by no means mild,

Who would throw the seas away to have but one more day

Of his own whims and fantasy and pomp;

In Springfield this is better than the Pyramids to men

Who have learned to scrap and to romp.

We were plain with each other, with Sangamon River calm, we laid on the lash long ago,

They are right. I am no poet, but they know my lifetime style,

And give me all the liberty I know.

IV

If I should land in Springfield, tomorrow morning early,

With blue prints for a zebra farm and track,

Proposing zebra races, no Springfield Citizen

Would turn a hair, nor like you, turn his back.

If I came with Spanish books for the Illinois State Library

From Mexico City or Madrid,

They would not insult me as you have insulted me.

They would not insist the books be hid.

If I should come with cages of Spokane canaries

And hang them up in front of every store,

The Springfield Citizen would laugh and spit and swear,

But he would not take the birds down from the door.

He might yap and squint and blah blah, but would let me have my way,

Like Old Samuel Johnson would stand pat.

You fill me full of food, you think you are not rude,

But you will not let me have my way like that.

If I should print new drawings in The Illinois State Register

They would not gabble “pen stroke”, “swirl” or “passion”,

They would merely grunt “again?” like honest, blunt he-men,

Would not assume to call me “not in fashion,”

If I take old Springfield, after years of absence,

With freight cars full of some new Burbank’s breed,

Cyclops oak-trees that grow faster than Australian Eucalyptus,

Golden rain-trees that scatter honey-seed,

Trees hardy as the north-pole tabby cat;

If I should plant my gift, in circles round the city

Till they sheltered and shadowed every flat,

They would not cut down the trees. They would leave me at my ease.

You will not let me have my way like that.

V

I do not take on friends who tinker with my liberty,

No matter how they boot-lick or beguile.

O foolish Lord Chesterfield, you ask me for one drawing

With your tongue in your cheek all the while.

Or would sweat me for one sonnet, then paste your label on it

Like a druggist who has standardized a drug,

My works are unstandardized, and not Peruna-advertised,—

O sweat me not for trinkets with a shrug.

And I know you still are silent on those Springfield zebra races.

I hope you keep on sweating till you're flat.

With merchants of Cathay, brothers in roundelay,

I will put them on before you can say "scat",

And you will fade all dazy if you find they're there to stay,—

You will not let me have my way like that?

O you want a cutie epic, yet you want no naughty song,

It must be a sonnet— fourteen-count-'em— long.

You want a poem operated on.

An end-page ornament, of the purest prig descent,

Not Venus-kissed, with reputation gone.

Therefore one Manhattan luncheon, one long afternoon of flattery

Exhausting your word-battery.

And then I am to sit

In my cell for seven years,

Till, with seven cents, and seven glycerine tears,

Your third assistant janitor appears.

VI

You call me a Troubadour,

But I am an adventurer, in hieroglyphics, buildings and designs.

When I was eight years old, I had two hundred building blocks

Given to me by The Reverend Fred H. Wines.

And I gave them to his grandson, half a lifetime afterward,

Not before I had made out of them

A Springfield built of silver blocks, and towers and vines and valentines,

And kite-lines rose to dizzy heights, and underneath were caves and mines and coal,

And those who came to view the sights paid five cornelian marbles for the toil.

]

VII

The music of that iron word “Reconciliation”

Calls me back to the Springfield voting-booth,

To the Springfield Elections, as funny as Mark Twain,

And sometimes free and beautiful as Youth.

We will elect a mayor, we will elect a president,

We did it twice, could do it any time.

And I say that this outshines your Main Street Magazine,

And I damn your little market for a rhyme.

The music of that soul’s word “Reconciliation”,

Will roll me back to Springfield after awhile,

And three or more will sit with me in the Leland music room,

And we will free Old Ireland in Style.

Yes, I will go back to that heartbreak that is home

And scrawl my work, if need be, on the fence

Of folks who are not worried if I do not fit their pattern,

Long reconciled to my born lack of sense.

In Springfield, that iron word “Reconciliation”

Will bring me back, will break my heart of stone,

And Protestant and Catholic, Jew and Unbeliever

Will bear me back to Love, and to my own.

And I will Pray to Mary, and to the Sacred Heart

In “The Church of Peter and Paul”

And watch the aged saints do the stations of the cross

And hear the great saints of tomorrow call [sic].

Vachel Lindsay[286]

[286] “While this poem was only recently finished, it is a record of the mood in which I gave up art study in New York, 1908.” Seemingly, a footnote postscript to the poem. Vachel Lindsay, “Twenty Years Ago: To the Right Honorable the Earl of Chesterfield.” *Palms*. (Guadalajara, Mexico (December 1928)): 67-71.

Works Cited

Addams, Jane. *Newer Ideals of Peace*. New York: The Chatauqua Press, 1907.

Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. "Society." *German Sociology: T.W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, G. Simmel, M. Weber, and Others*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1998.

Allen, James, Hilton Als, John Lewis, Leon F. Litwack. *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*. Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000.

Allen, Theodore W. *The Invention of the White Race: Volume II: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America*. New York: Verso, 1997.

Antin, Mary. *They Who Knock at Our Gates: A Complete Gospel of Immigration*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914.

"The Appeal of Primitive Jazz." *Literary Digest* (August, 1917): 26-29.

Ashworth, Tony. *Trench Warfare, 1914-18: The Live and Let Live System*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980.

Atkinson, Rick. *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy 1943-1944*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007.

Banta, Martha. *Taylored Lives: Narrative Production in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Barnard, Harry. *Eagle Forgotten: The Life of John Peter Altgeld*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1938.

Barrett, James R. and David Roediger. "Inbetween Peoples: Race Nationality and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class. *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 1997: 3-45.

Baudrillard, Jean. *America*. Chris Turner, Translator. New York: Verso, 1996.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Fatal Strategies*. Translated by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski. New York: Semiotext(e), 1990.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Impossible Exchange*. Chris Turner, Translator. New York: Verso, 2001.

Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." *Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward: 2000—1887*. Cecelia Tichi, Ed. New York, Penguin Books, 1988.

Benedict, Ruth. *Patterns of Culture*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934.

Benson, Arthur Christopher. *Ruskin: A Study in Personality*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books, 1967.

Black, Edwin. *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003.

Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

Boaz, Franz. "The Mind of Primitive Man." *Science: A Weekly Journal Devoted to the Advancement of Science, Publishing the Official Notices and Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* (February 22, 1901): 281-89.

Bordens, Kenneth S. and Irwin A. Horowitz. *Social Psychology*. Second Edition. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002.

Boyer, Paul. *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Broderick, Francis L. *W. E. B. Du Bois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959.

Brody, Jennifer DeVere. "Memory's Movements: Minstrelsy, Miscegenation, and American Race Studies." *American Literary History* (Winter 1999): 736-45.

Buttigieg, Joseph A, Editor. *Antonio Gramsci: Prison Notebooks*. Volume I. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

Calkins, Raymond. *Substitutes for the Saloon: An Investigation made for the Committee of Fifty under the Direction of Francis G. Peabody, Elgin R. L. Gould and William M. Sloane*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1901.

Carlyle, Thomas. *A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Carlyle*. G. B. Tennyson, Ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1984.

Carlyle, Thomas. *The French Revolution: A History*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1909.

Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*. John Adams, Editor. Fifth Edition. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907

Carlyle, Thomas. *Past and Present*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918.

Carlyle, Thomas. *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdrockn*. New York: Collier, 1897.

Carlyle, Thomas. *Two Note Books of Thomas Carlyle: From 23d March 1822 to 16th May 1832*. Charles Eliot Norton, Ed. New York: The Grolier Club, 1898.

Carter, Marva Griffin. *Swing Along: The Musical Life of Will Marion Cook*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Chenetier, Marc. "Lindsay and Imagism." *Proceedings of a Symposium on American Literature*. Marta Sienicka, Ed. Poznan, 1979.

Chenteier, Marc. *Letters of Vachel Lindsay*. New York: Burt Franklin & Company, 1979.

Chomsky, Noam. "In a Rare Joint Interview Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn on Iraq, Vietnam, Activism and History." *Moderate Observer: Collection of News & Opinion articles promoting moderation*. April 17th, 2007. February 09, 2008. http://moderate wordpress.com 2007/04/07/in-rare-joint-interview-noam-chomsky-and-howard-zinn-on-iraq-vienam-activism-and-history/

Cohen, Paula Marantz. *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

"Colored Men and Women Lynched without Trial." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (February, 1915): 196-97.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness: Complete Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Ross C. Murfin, Ed. New York: Macmillian, 1996.

Conwell, Russell Herman, and Robert Shackelton. *Acres of Diamonds*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1915.

Cook, Howard Willard. *Our Poets of Today*. New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1918.

Conwell, Russell H. *Acres of Diamonds*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1915.

Courtney, Susan. *Hollywood Fantasies of Miscegenation: Spectacular Narratives of Gender and Race, 1903-1967*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Crevecoeur, St. Jean. "Letters from an American Farmer." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Vol. I. Second Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985.

Crunden, Robert M. *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984.

Cull, Christine, and Laura Hillary Goldstein. *The Clinical Psychologist's Handbook of Epilepsy: Assessment and Management*. Illustrated Edition. New York: Psychology Press, 1997.

Curtis, Susan. *Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and the Modern American Culture*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Daniel, Walter C. "Vachel Lindsay, W. E. B. Du Bois and *The Crisis*," *The Crisis* (August, 1979): 291-93.

Davis, Charles T. *Black is the Color of the Cosmos: Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942-1981*. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, 1982.

DeCaro, Peter A. "Ho Chi Minh's Rhetoric for Revolution." *American Communications Journal*: Wednesday, September 27, 2000, 14:18:38 GMT. Hosted by NC State University. November 13, 2006 http://acjournal.org/holdings/vol13Iss3/spec1/decaro.html. This was originally taken from Ho Chi Minh's *International Correspondence*, No. 59, 1924.

DeCaro, Peter A. *Rhetoric of Revolt: Ho Chi Minh's Discourses for Revolution*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998.

Dickerson, Vanessa D. *Dark Victorians*. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Dickinson, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Helen Plotz, Ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1958.

Dillingham. *Dictionary of Races or Peoples*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907.

Dixon, Thomas, Jr. *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005.

Dixon, Thomas, Jr. *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden—1865-1900*. Gretna, Louisiana: A Firebird Press Book, 2001.

Donnelly, Ignatius. *The Golden Bottle: Or the Story of Ephraim Benezet of Kansas*. Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2003.

Douglass, Frederick. "The Color Line." *The North American Review* Vol. 132, Issue 295 (June 1881): 567-78.

Dower, John W. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *Industrialism and the American Worker: 1865-1920*. Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985.

DuBois, W. E. B. "Credo." *Independent* 57 (October 6th, 1904): 787.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Introduction by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Twenty-Second Edition. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company, 1938.

Du Bois, W. E. B., and Herbert Aptheker, Eds. *Selections from the Crisis*. Millwood, New York: Kraus-Thompson Organization, 1983.

Dugdale, Richard. *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity*.

Fifth Edition. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891.

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. "Hoo, Hoo, Hoo." *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Durkheim, Emile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Translated by John Spaulding & George Simpson. New York: The Free Press, 1979.

Durrell, Lawrence. *Mountolive*. New York: Pocket Books, 1969.

Dyer, Richard. "Into the Light: the Whiteness of the South in *The Birth of a Nation*." *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Dyer, Thomas G. *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.

Engler, Balz. *Poetry and Community*. Tubingen: Stanffenburg Verlag, 1990.

"Epilepsy and Hysteria." *The Doctor: A Monthly Review of British and Foreign Medical Practice and Literature* (March 3rd, 1874): 46-47.

Erickson, Erik H. *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Norton, 1958.

Estabrook, Arthur. *The Jukes in 1915*. Washington: The Carnegie Institution, 1916.

Everson, William K. *American Silent Film*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1998.

"Eyestrain and It's Effect on Health." *The New York Times* (May 7, 1907): SM8.

Farwell, Byron. *The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-century Land Warfare*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001.

Ferguson, George Oscar. *The Psychology of the Negro: An Experimental Study*. New York: Science Press, 1916.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Mark Twain and Race." *A Historical Guide to Mark Twain*. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editor. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African-American Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fisler, Benjamin Daniel. "The Phenomenology of Racialism: Blackface puppetry in American Theatre, 1872-1939." Diss. University of Maryland, 2005.

Foner, Philip S. "The First May Day and the Haymarket Affair." *May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday: 1886-1986*. New York: International Publishers, 1986.

Fox, Richard Wightman, and T. J. Jackson Lears, Editors. *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

Freidel, Frank. *America in the Twentieth Century*. Third Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Frenz, Horst, Editor. *Nobel Lectures, Including Presentation Speeches and Laureates' Biographies: Literature 1901-1967*. New York: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1969.

Frick, John W. *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-century America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Friedman, Susan S. *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1962.

Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Garland, Hamlin. "Under the Lion's Paw." *Harper's Weekly*. Volume XXXIIL, No. 1707: p. 726-727.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "Writing 'Race' and the Difference it Makes." *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Gilbert, Daniel. *Stumbling on Happiness*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Ginger, Ray. *Altgeld's America: The Lincoln Ideal Versus Changing Realities*. Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1965.

Glicksberg, Charles I. "Bias, Fiction, and the Negro." *Phylon*. Volume 13, No. 2: 127-135.

Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Doubleday, 1961.

Gompers, Samuel, and the American Federation of Labor. *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism: Which Shall Survive?* Washington: American Federation of Labor, 1901.

Goodwyn, Lawrence. *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Gordon, Anne Adams. *The Beautiful Life of Frances E. Willard*. Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishers Association, 1898.

Gordon, Elizabeth Putnam. *Women Torch-Bearers: The Story of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union*. Evanston, Illinois: National Woman's Christian Temperance Union Publishing House, 1924.

Gordon, Rae Beth. "Charcot to Charlot: Unconscious Imitation and the Spectatorship in French Cabaret and Early Cinema." *Critical Inquiry* (Spring, 2001): 515-49.

Gossett, Thomas F. *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963.

Graham, Stephen. *Tramping with a Poet in the Rockies*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks*. Lawrence Kritzman and Richard Wolin, Eds. Volume I. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924.

Green, Able, and Joe Laurie, Jr. *Show Biz, from Vaude to Video*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951.

Green, James R. *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1980.

Grunbaum, Adolf. *Physics, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis: Essays in Honor of Adolf Grunbaum*. Robert Sonne Cohen and Larry Lauden, Eds. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983.

Gubar, Susan. *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture*. Arnold Rampersad and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, General Editors. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Hamilton, Clayton. "The Art of the Moving Picture Play." *Bookman*. (January 1911): 512-16.

Handler, Richard and Eric Gable. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1997.

Hazelton, George C. and J. Harry Benrimo. *The Yellow Jacket: A Chinese Play done in the Chinese Manner*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1913.

Heinlein, Robert A. *Glory Road*. Riverdale, New York: Baen Publishing, 1996.

Heinz, W. C., Editor. *The Fireside Book of Boxing*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961.

Henderson, Alice C. "Reviews." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume V (October-March 1914-5): 294-299.

Henesey, Andrew F. *A Master Builder on the Congo: A Memorial to the Service and Devotion of Robert Ray Elred and Lillian Byers Elred*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916.

Henri, Robert. *The Art Spirit*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960.

Hine, Thomas. *Populuxe*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.

Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970. Part 1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975.

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Ralph Manheim, Trans. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.

Hoagland, Edward. "Johnny Appleseed." *American Heritage* (December, 1979): 61-73.

Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Holmberg, Arthur Carl. "Louis Lambert and Maximiliano Rubin: The Inner Vision and the Outer Man." *Hispanic Review* (Spring, 1978): 119-136.

Hooks, Bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1990.

Hoyt, Edwin P. *Japan's War: The Great Pacific Conflict, 1853 to 1952*. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1986.

Huey, Edmund Burke. *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading: With a Review of the History of Reading and Writing and of Methods, Texts, and Hygiene in Reading*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928.

Hummer, T. R. *The Muse in the Machine: Essays on Poetry and the Anatomy of the Body Politic*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006.

Hunt, Lynn. "Against Presentism," *Perspectives* 40 (May 2002): 7-9.

Huth, Hans. *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.

Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

"Immigration from an Ethical Standpoint." *The Union Signal* (February 14, 1895): 8.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998.

James, Henry. *The American Scene.* New York: Harpers, 1907.

James, Joy. "A New Declaration of Independence." *Imprisoned Intellectuals: America's Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation and Rebellion*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

James, William H. and Stephen L. Johnson. *Doin' Drugs: Patterns of African American Addiction.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.

James, William. *Pragmatism*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1991.

Jeffrey, David W., Editor. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1992.

Jennings, Francis. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975.

Jensen, Joan M. *Within These Hands: Women Working on the Land*. Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1981.

"Johnny Appleseed: A Pioneer Hero." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (LVIV): 833.

Johnson, James Weldon. *Along This way: The Auto-Biography of James Weldon Johnson*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2000.

Jones, Kent. "Appendix." *Art of the Moving Picture*. New York: Random House, 2000.

Karlsen, Carol F. *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Kasper, Shirl. *Annie Oakley*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Kennedy, David M. *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Kenner, Hugh. *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1974.

Kermode, Frank, Ed. "Appreciations of Individual Authors, 1918 to 1930, from Philip Massinger." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1975.

Kern, Fritz. *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages*. S. B. Chrimes, Trans. Oxford, England: B. Blackwell, 1939.

"The Knights of King Arthur." *The Union-Signal* (February 26, 1895): 6.

Koch, Christopher. *Literary Digest* (March 28, 1914): 687.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

Kraut, Alan M. *The Huddled Masses: the Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921*. Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Lacouture, Jean. *DeGaulle: The Rebel, 1890-1944*. Translated by Patrick O'Brien. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.

Larned, J. N. *The New Larned History for Ready Reference, Reading and Research*. Volume 1. Springfield, Massachusetts: C. A. Nichols Publishing Company, 1922.

Lasch, Christopher. *The Social Thought of Jane Addams*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965.

Layton, Edwin T., Jr. *The Revolt of the Engineers: Social Responsibility and the American Engineering Profession*. Cleveland: The Press of the Case Western Reserve University, 1971.

Lears, T. Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

Lears, T. Jackson. "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of Consumer Culture." *The Culture of Consumption*. T. Jackson Lears and R. Fox, Eds. New York: Pantheon, 1983.

Lee, Gerald Stanley. *Crowds: A Moving-Picture of Democracy*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913.

Leverier, James. *The Indians and Their Captives*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977.

Levine, Lawrence, W. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Lewis, David Levering. *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993.

Lewis, Sinclair, Mark Schorer. "Afterword." *Elmer Gantry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1927.

Lewis, Sinclair. *Free Air*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. New York: Bantam Books, 1996.

Lindsay, Vachel. "Adventures Preaching Hieroglyphic Sermons." *Collected Poems*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1927.

Lindsay, Vachel. *The Art of the Moving Picture*. Martin Scorsese, Ed. Stanley Kauffmann, Introduction. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.

Lindsay, Vachel. *Collected Poems*. New York: The Macmillian Company, 1923.

Lindsay, Vachel. "Correspondence: A Note from Mr. Lindsay." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. Volume XI, No. 1 (October 1917): 54-55.

Lindsay, Vachel. *The Congo and Other Poems*. Introduction by Harriet Monroe. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926.

Lindsay, Vachel. *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven and Other Poems*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1913.

Lindsay, Vachel. *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Introduction by Ron Sakolsky. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999.

Lindsay, Vachel. "The Golden-Faced People: A Story of the Chinese Conquest of America." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (November, 1914): 36-42.

Lindsay, Nicholas Vachel. "The Jazz Bird." Press release. [May.] Hermann Hagedorn Collection, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Vigilantes Press Releases, ca. May 1918.

Lindsay, Vachel. *A Letter for Your Wicked Private Ear Only* (Springfield, Ill.: privately printed, 1920).

Lindsay, Vachel. "Notes on the Booker Washington Trilogy." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume VIII, No. III (June, 1916): 146-148.

Lindsay, Nicholas Vachel. "These Ten Lectures." October 14th, 1908. Young Men's Christian Association.

Lindsay, Vachel. "Twenty Years Ago: To the Right Honorable the Earl of Chesterfield." *Palms*. Guadalajara, Mexico (December 1928): 67-71.

Lindsay, Vachel. "Walt Whitman." *The New Republic* 37 (5 December 1923): 3-5

Lippincott, Benjamin Evans. *Victorian Critics of Democracy: Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Stephen, Maine, Lecky*. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1964.

London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*. New York: Barnes and Nobel Books, 2001.

"The Looking Glass." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (August, 1916): 182-89.

Loos, Anita. "A Poet in Love." *Fate Keeps on Happening: Adventures of Lorelei Lee and Other Writings*. Ray Pierre Corsini, Ed. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1984.

Lott, Eric. *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Lounsbury, Myron, Editor. *The Progress and Poetry of the Movies: A Second Book of Film Criticism by Vachel Lindsay*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1995.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996.

Luker, Ralph E. "The Social Gospel and the Failure of Racial Reform, 1877-1898." *Church History* (March 1977): 80-99.

Lynd, Robert & Helen. *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1957.

MacLean, Nancy. *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Manning, Susan Allene, and Melissa Benson. "Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany." *The Drama Review* (Summer 1986): 30-45.

Manning, Susan. N/A. *Dance Research Journal* Vol. 18 #2: 70-73.

Marchand, Roland. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Marcuse, Herbert. *An Essay on Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

Markham, Edwin. *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems*. New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1900.

Martin, Jay, Editor. *A Singer in the Dawn: Reinterpretations of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. Cornwall, New York: Cornwall Press, 1975.

Martin, Robert Francis. *Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862-1935*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Marx, Karl, and John C. Raines. *Marx on Religion*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.

Massa, Ann. *Vachel Lindsay: Fieldworker for the American Dream*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970.

Masters, Edgar Lee. *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America*. Cheshire, Connecticut: Biblio and Tannen Publishers, 1962.

Matthiessen, Francis Otto. *The Oxford Book of American Verse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Maus, L. M. "Disease of Degeneracy." *Union Signal* (2 February 1914): 3.

May, Henry F. *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967.

May, Lary. "Movie Star Politics: The Screen Actors' Guild, Cultural Conversion, and the Hollywood Red Scare." *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Menkes, John H., Harvey B. Sarnat, and Bernard L. Maria. *Child Neurology*. 7th Edition. London: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, 2005.

Mitchell, Don. *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Mohl, Raymond A. *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920*. Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985.

Monroe, Harriet. "Comment: Notes and Queries from Mr. Lindsay." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume XVII (February, 1921): 262-266.

Moore, Jacqueline M. *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift*. Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2003.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: A Plume Book, 1988.

Mosier, John. *The Myth of the Great War: How the Germans Won the Battles and How the Americans Saved the Allies*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1964.

Mumford, Lewis. *Technics and Civilization*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1963).

Musallam, Adnan A. From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2005.

"New Publications." *The New York Times* (27 January 1890): 2.

De Oliver, Miguel. "Historical Preservation and Identity: The Alamo and the Production of a Consumer Landscape." *Antipode* 23:1 (1996): 1-23.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Orwell, George, Sonia Orwell, Ian Angus. "Why I Joined the Independent Labour Party." *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: The Collected Essays, Journalism & Letters*. Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher, 2000.

Parker, Alison M. "'Hearts Uplifted and Minds Refreshed': The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Production of Pure Culture in the United States, 1880-1930." *Journal of Women's History* 11.2 (1999): 135-58.

Parkman, Francis. *The Oregon Trail*. A. B. Guthrie, Jr., Forward. Markham, Ontario: Signet Classic, 1978.

Parrington, Vernon L. *Main Currents in American Thought*. New York: Harcourt Trade Publishers, 1963.

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Paz, Octavio. "The Sons of La Malinche." *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico*. New York: Grove Press Incorporated, 1961.

Pearson, Roberta E. *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1992.

Platt, Margaret B. "Substitutes for the Saloon." *Union Signal* (15 July 1915): 4.

"A Poem on the Negro." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (May, 1915): 18-19.

Pound, Ezra. "This Constant Preaching to the Mob." *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Volume VIII, No. III (June, 1916): 144-45.

"The Race Problem: Miss Willard on the Political Puzzle of the South," *The Voice*, (28 October 1890): p. 8.

Rampersad, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I: 1902-1942: I, Too, Sing America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Rawlinson, George. *Ancient Egypt*. With Arthur Gilman. Tenth Edition. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886.

Reed, Ishmael. "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan." *From Totem to Hip-hop*: *A Multicultural Anthology of Poetry Across the Americas, 1900-2002*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002.

Reed, Ishamel. *19 Necromancers from Now*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970.

Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1974.

Reed, Ishmael. *New and Collected Poems: 1964-2006*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006.

Reed, Ishamel. "The Vachel Lindsay Fault." *Chattanooga*. New York: Random House, 1973.

Riis, Jacob A. *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996.

Riis, Thomas L, Ed. *The Music and Scripts of In Dahomey*. Madison: A-R Editions, Inc., 1996.

Riley, B. F. *The White Man's Burden: A Discussion of the Interracial Question with Special Reference to the Responsibility of the White Race to the Negro Problem*. Third Edition. Chicago, Illinois: Regan Printing House, 1910.

Rocine, V. G. *Heads, Faces, Types, Races*. Chicago: Vaught-Rocine, 1910.

Rorty, Richard. *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Rose, Kenneth D. *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Rosenzweig, Roy. *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Ross, Edward Alsworth. *Sin and Society: An Analysis of the Latter-day Iniquity*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907.

Ross, Steven J. *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Rowlandson, Mary. "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Volume I. Second Edition. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985.

Ruggles, Eleanor. *The West-Going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959.

Russell, Herbert K. *Edgar Lee Masters: A Biography*. Illustrated Edition. Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Sakolsky, Ron, Editor. "Introduction." *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1999.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger, Eds. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966.

Savage, Kirk. *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Sayre, Robert F., Ed. *Adventures Rhymes & Designs: Including the Prose Volume Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty Together with Rhymes to be Traded for Bread, The Village Improvement Parade and Selections from The Village Magazine*. New York: The Eakins Press, 1968.

Schachter, Steven C., Gregory L. Holmes, and Dorothee Ksteleijn-Nolst Trenite. Behavioral Aspects of Epilepsy: Principles and Practice. New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2007.

Schweninger, Loren. *Black Property Owners in the South: 1790-1915*. Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

"Segregation." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (November, 1914): 70-71.

Senechal, Roberta. *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Seymour-Smith, Martin. *Robert Graves: His Life and Work*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.

Shank, Barry. "Bliss, or Blackface Sentiment." *Boundary 2*. (Summer, 2003): 46-64.

Sheehan, Neil. *A Bright and Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. New York: Random House, 1988.

Shipler, David K. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004.

Shively, JoEllen. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57 (December 1993): 725-734.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. New York: Bantam Books, 1981.

Singh, G. B. *Gandhi: Behind the Mask of Divinity*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2004.

Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 160-1860*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973.

Small, Meredith F. *The Culture of our Discontent: Beyond the Medical Model of Mental Illness*. Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 2006.

Smedley, Audrey. *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*. Second Edition. Bolder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Snyder, Russell J. *Emotions: The Controlling Factor in the Church*. South Bend, Indiana: Xulon Press, 2008.

The Social Evil in Chicago. New York: The New York Times, 1910.

"Socialism in Mexico." *The Masses* (April 1911): 3

Sollors, Werner. *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Spingarn, J. E. "Editorial: A Letter and an Answer." *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. (January, 1917): 114.

Steffens, Lincoln. *The Shame of the Cities*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1989.

Steffens, Lincoln. "A Talk Across the Border." *The Masses* (July 1916): 14-15.

Stein, Leon, and Philip Taft, Editors. *The Accused and the Accusers: The Famous Speeches of the Eight Chicago Anarchists in Court*. New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969.

Stelzle, Charles, Jane Addams, Charles P. Neill, Graham Taylor, and George P. Eckman. *The Social Application of Religion*. Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1908.

Stevenson, David. *Cataclysm: The First World War as Political Tragedy*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Stewart, Cal. "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry." *Uncle Josh's Punkin Centre Stories*. Chicago: Stanton and Van Vliet Company, 1905.

Stivers, Richard. *Hair of the Dog: Irish Drinking and its American Stereotype*. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Stockdale, Melissa K., 'My Death for the Motherland Is Happiness': Women, Patriotism, and Soldiering in Russia's Great War, 1914-1917. *The American Historical Review* 109.1 (2004): 76 pars. 17 Feb. 2008 <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/109.1/stockdale.html>.

Stone, I. F. *The Truman Era*. Intro. by Robert Sklar. New York: Random House, 1972.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. New York: Penguin Books 1981.

Strumpell, Adolf von, Frederick Cheever Shattuck, Herman Frank Vickery, Philip Coombs Knapp. *A Text-book of Medicine for Students and Practitioners*. New York: D. Appleton, 1901.

Stubblefield, Anna. "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization." *Hypatia* (Spring 2007): 162-81.

Stubblefield, Anna. *Ethics Along the Color Line*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Studlar, Gaylyn. "Oh, 'Doll Devine:' Mary Pickford, Masquerade, and the Pedophilic Gaze." *The Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. Jennifer M. Bean, and Diane Negra, Eds. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.

Szasz, Thomas S. *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970.

Taylor, Clyde. "The Re-Birth of the Aesthetic." *Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema*. Daniel Bernardi, Editor. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996.

Thompson, Francis. *The Hound of Heaven*. Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1911.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. Volume II. New York: Vantage Books, 1990.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Christopher Tolkien, Ed. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.

Toll, Robert C. *Blacking up: the Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Toulmin, Stephen, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik. *An Introduction to Reasoning*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

Twain, Mark. "King Leopold's Soliloquy." *Following the Equator and Anti-imperialist Essays: Mark Twain*. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Editor. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Twain, Mark. *Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins*. Malcolm Bradbury, Editor. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

Valverde, Mariana. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

Vanden Bossche, Chris R. *Carlyle and the Search for Authority*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1991.

VanDerBeets, Richard. *The Indian Captivity Narrative: An American Genre*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1984.

Van Doren, Carl. *Many Minds*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1924.

Wade, Wyn Craig. *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Ward, John Chapman. "Vachel Lindsay is 'Lying Low.'" *College Literature*. Volume XII, Number 3 (Fall, 1985): 233-45.

Warrington, Bob. "The Fight for Sunday Baseball in Philadelphia." Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society. 2005. July 9th, 2006 http://www.philadelphiaathletics.org/history/sundaybaseball.html

Washington, Booker T. *The Story of My Life and Work*. Toronto, 1900.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery: An Authoritative Text, Contents and Composition History, Criticism*. Mineola, New York: Courier Dover Publications, 1995.

Webster's New World Thesaurus. Michael Agnes, Ed. Third Edition. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1997.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *On Lynchings*. New York: Humanity Books, 2002.

Wells, Ida B. *Crusader for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*. Alfreda M. Duster, Ed. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970.

Weston, Mildred. *Vachel Lindsay: Poet in Exile*. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1987.

White, Ronald C. *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel (1877-1925)*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990.

White T. H. *The Once and Future King*. New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1958.

Whitman, Walt and Francis Murphy. "Song of Myself." *Walt Whitman the Complete Poems*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1986.

Whorf, Banjamin Lee. "Language, Thought, *and* Reality." *Language, Thought, and Reality*. John B. Carroll, Ed. New York: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1956.

"Why 'Jazz' Sends Us Back to the Jungle." *Current Opinion* (September, 1918): 165.

Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order: 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.

Wiggins, Lida Keck. *The Life and Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar: Containing his Complete Poetical Works, his Best Short Stories, Numerous Anecdotes and a Complete Biography of the Famous Poet*. Naperville, Illinois: J. L. Nichols & Company, 1907.

Willard, Frances. "The Religious World." *The Outlook* (November 24, 1894): 863.

Williams, Edward Huntington. "Negro Cocaine 'Fiends' New Southern Menace." *New York Times* (February 8, 1914): Section 5, p. 12.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Wilson, William H. *The City Beautiful Movement*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Winston, Diane. *Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Wolfe, Glenn Joseph. *Vachel Lindsay: The Poet as Film Theorist*. New York: Arno Press, 1973.

Wood, Gordon S. *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993.

Wood, Richard, Editor. *Film and Propaganda in America: A Documentary History: World War I*. Volume I. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990.

Wright, Kai. *Soldiers of Freedom: An Illustrated History of African Americans in the Armed Forces*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2002.

Zurier, Rebecca. *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2006.

VITA

David W. Bates attended Fairfax High School, Fairfax, Virginia. In 1970 he entered Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, graduating with a B.A. in History. In 1974 he entered The University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, graduating with an M.A.T. in History. In 1980 he entered George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, graduating with a B.A. in English. In 1982 he entered Miami University in Miami, Ohio, graduating with an M.A. in English. During the following years he was employed as a Professor of English at Bucks County Community College, in Newtown, Pennsylvania. In September, 2000, he entered the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin.

Permanent Address: 10211 Rodgers Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

This manuscript was typed by the author.